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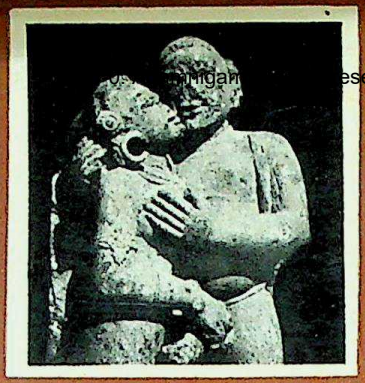

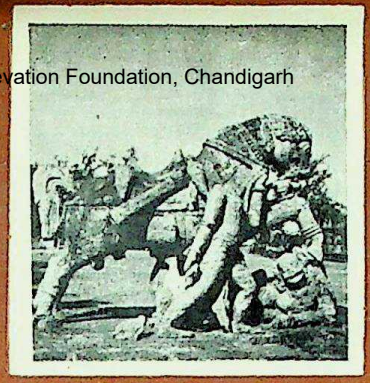

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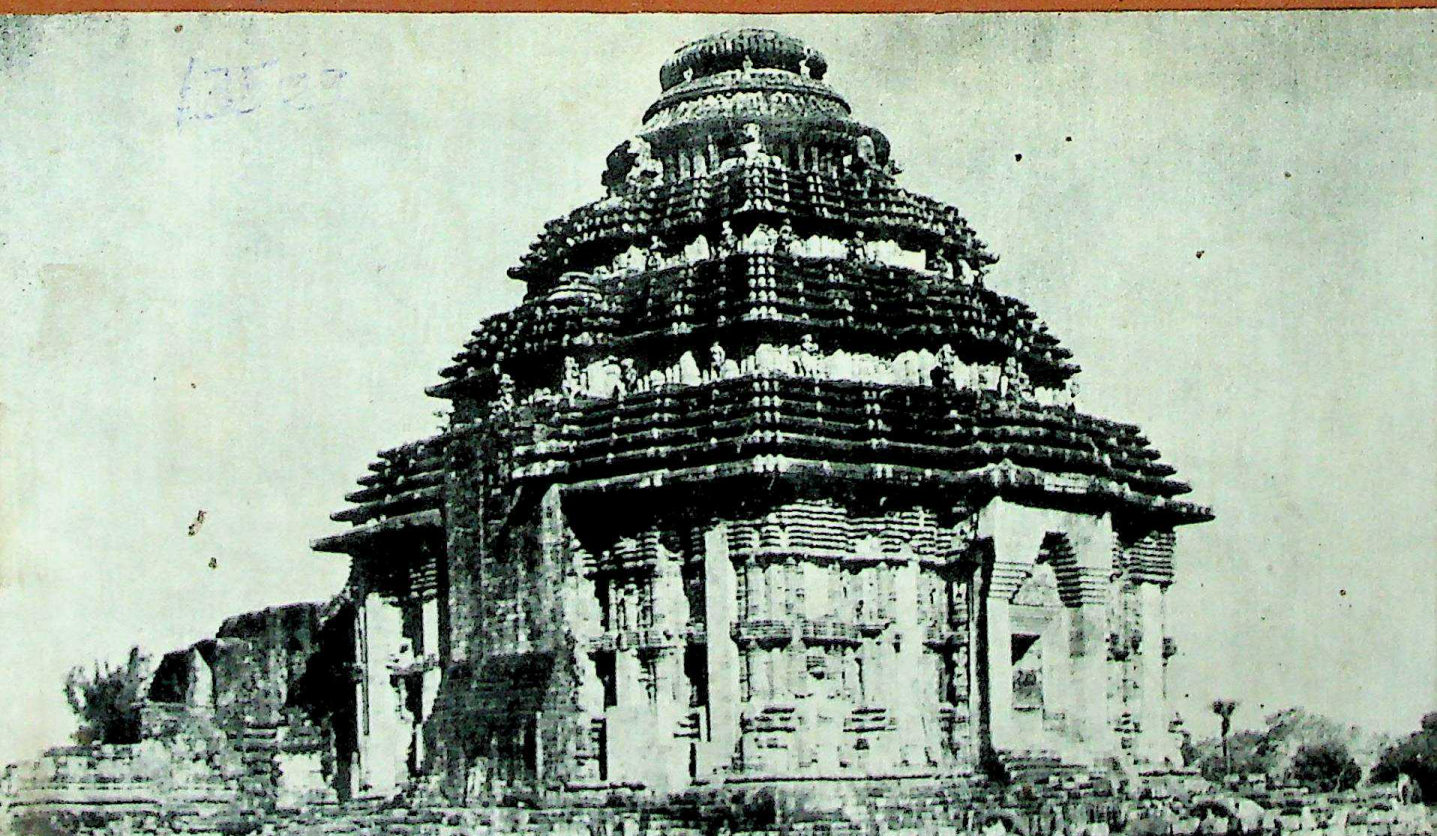

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Miracle of Konark

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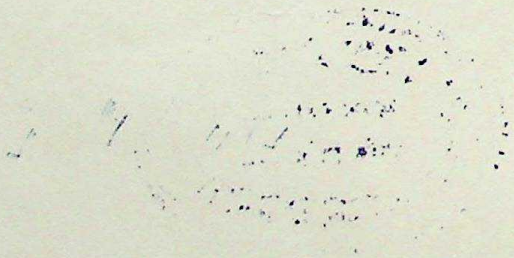

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MIRACLE OF KONARK

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PREFACE

NO APOLOGY IS NEEDED for producing this book on the Sun Temple of Konark, the so-called *Black Pagoda*. Indeed, if an apology is needed, it is for not having done this so far. The Konark monument is among the most magnificent of India's works of Art, and, along with the Taj at Agra and that *White Pagoda*, the Jagannath Temple at Puri, the most talked of. And yet—and surprisingly—few complete and fully illustrated studies of this theme have been published so far. As such, it deserved to have been given this attention much earlier and certainly before even the temples of Khajuraho. On the other hand, it is just as well that this book appears later than my study of Khajuraho's shrines. The Orissan Temple is of a later date and it is such a *difficult* theme to write about that the apprenticeship I served and the training I received while writing *The Holy Cities of India*, *Immortal Khajuraho*, and *The Cult of Desire*, came handy for handling this subject.

My interest in this miracle of art, the temple of Konark, was aroused about ten years ago when I first saw it in connection with my work on India's holy cities. In a way, therefore, this book has been in the making all these years. Later on, when I undertook an exhaustive study of the sanctuaries of Khajuraho, the Konark Temple was almost all the time in my mind since both generally and, in respect of the erotic element, particularly, the two themes are intimately connected. A further step in the study of Konark was taken when I worked on my interpretation of the erotic sculpture of India published under the title, *The Cult of Desire*. And though this has still to be published, I should state that I have already prepared a book on the temples and sculpture of Bhubaneswar. These temples are Konark's precursors and, without a study of these, understanding the Sun Temple is just not possible. I feel, therefore, that I have done all that I could to ensure that the *Miracle of Konark* should prove to be a reliable study.

Konark is a ruin and even with all the pains taken by the writer and the Publishers to do it full justice, a sense of frustration remains, and a strange wistfulness, a feeling of intense longing and equally intense sadness, at never having had a full or even an adequate view of what was possibly the finest effort on

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every count which the Hindu artists made in the realm of sacred architecture. How one wishes that the Sun Temple had stayed whole and intact like the Lingraj at Bhubaneswar or the Kandariya Mahadev at Khajuraho! As it is, it is but a broken fragment of a glorious dream, a floating portion of an exquisite vision and a sorry reminder of the transience of the things we make.

That is why, one is grateful to those who helped preserve, from further deterioration and total disappearance, such remnants and remains of the temple as we can still see and study. One is grateful also to the photographer, Darshan Lall for having helped in his own way in the same task. He has supplied all the photographs reproduced here. In these fine pictures of his, some record will now remain of the splendour, even if fragmentary, of this great and gracious structure.

Incidentally, the reader will come across two different spellings of the place where the Sun Temple stands. One is Konark, the other Konarak. Both are current, Konark being the correct, pure Sanskrit term meaning 'Corner of the Sun'. Konarak is the vulgarised and the more popular pronunciation thereof.

In the preparation of this book, I have drawn upon many sources and I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to these. Quotations used have been listed in the *Notes and References* at the end, and the books consulted have been mentioned in the *Select Bibliography*. If, through over-sight, any acknowledgement has been missed, I sincerely apologise for the omission.

DELHI,
1st October, 1967.

KANWAR LAL

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1. IN PRAISE OF KONARK

THE SUN TEMPLE OF KONARK in Orissa is possibly the most magnificent 'ruin' in India. Popularly styled as the Black Pagoda—to distinguish it from the equally celebrated White Pagoda at Puri—this ancient monument counts among the absolutely top-ranking creations of Indian architecture. And since it stands so prominently on the sea-route, the world has known of it for quite a long time, certainly, for all the centuries since the European adventurers, Dutch, Portuguese, the French or English, first sailed, across the Indian ocean and through the Bay of Bengal, to and from the East Indies. What is more, those who visited this exceptionally impressive structure beheld on its walls strange and intriguing figures, figures so extraordinary in their view of the matter that they could not help talking about these to whoever they met. And so the name and fame of this wonder of the Earth spread far and wide. Then, when the invader came on to the soil of India and started examining and exploring her incredibly rich heritage in the field of art and architecture, critic after discerning critic joined in a chorus of high tribute to this temple.

The first of such tributes was paid by Abul Fazl, minister of Akbar, the Great. He noted in the Aeen-i-Akbari: "Near Jagannath is a temple dedicated to the Sun. Its cost was defrayed by twelve years revenue of the province. Even those whose judgement is critical and who are difficult to please stand astonished at its sight." That was somewhere around A.D. 1580, nearly four hundred years ago, and about two hundred years or so after the date which critics and historians generally accept as the date of this temple's construction. According to Abul Fazl the temple had been put up centuries earlier than that. "It is said," he comments, "that somewhat over 730 years ago, Raja Narsing Deo completed this stupendous fabric and left this mighty memorial to posterity". He records further that "twenty-eight temples stand in its vicinity; six before the entrance and twenty-two without the enclosure,"[1] and mentions other details of which we shall speak in due course.

Later critics continued to 'stand astonished' at the sight of the great monument—or, rather, of whatever remained of it. For, by the time the first of these recorded his view—which was nearly two hundred and fifty years later—the

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structure had undergone a great deal of ruination. Even so it received the following words of praise from Stirling: "The Black Pagoda even in its present imperfect and dilapidated condition presents a highly curious and beautiful specimen of ancient Hindu temple architecture.... It must be allowed that there is an air of elegance, combined with massiveness, in the whole structure which entitles it to no small share of admiration."[2]

Stirling was followed by that great doyen among critics, Fergusson. He wrote: "The temple itself is of the same form as all the Orissan temples and nearly of the same dimensions as the great ones of Bhubaneswar and Puri; it surpasses however both these in lavish richness of details, so much so, indeed, that perhaps I don't exaggerate when I say that it is, for its size, the most richly ornamented building, externally at least, in the whole world."[3]

Those who followed Fergusson continued to hold the Konark monument—the only temple which, according to Hunter, "has wrung an unwilling tribute even from the Mohammedans"—in high esteem. Hunter himself was lavish in his appreciation of this building: "The most exquisite memorial of Sun-worship is the temple of Konark upon the Orissa shore. The temple at Jagannath falls far short of this marvellous structure—which rose in honour of the Sun, fifty years later."[4] Three decades later, John Marshall, a former Director-General of Archaeology, said: "There is no monument of Hinduism I think that is at once so stupendous and so perfectly proportioned as the Black Pagoda, and none which leaves so deep an impression on the memory. When Fergusson wrote of it so admiringly he had seen but half of its beauty. The deep and richly carved basement with the horses and chariots of the Sun God had not been unearthed in his day, nor were any traces visible of the massive dancing hall in front which makes such a splendid addition to the main building."[5] Ananda Coomaraswamy who showered exceptionally high praise on this temple said : "The temple is not only unique as a temple, but is in itself both architecturally and in the details of its sculpture, one of the noblest monuments of Indian Mediæval art."[6] In the opinion of Percy Brown: "The temple was one of the finest architectural efforts, the Indian master masons ever made.... The temple of Konark is, in its design, a class by itself; it represents the crystallised and accumulated experience of several hundred years of this type of temple building."[7]

These are but a few of the views selected from amongst scores of such tributes. One could go on quoting but that is hardly necessary. All these carry the same refrain and regard the Konark temple as a monument of rare distinction. Among structures which combine grace and beauty with size and massiveness, there is hardly any other building of the past which can rival this sanctuary. Marking the zenith and culmination of centuries of temple building in Orissa, it comes as a kind of ideal which was so much of an ideal that, if we should believe the general opinion, the temple was never finished. The plan, it is held, was too

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bold, the concept too mighty, to be realised in actuality. Consequently, the craftsmen of Orissa who had constructed another perfect monument, the great temple of Lingraj in Bhubaneswar which was so well conceived and so well completed, failed to carry out this far more ambitious scheme. Maybe this indicates that there is a limit to man's effort and that the maximum in this respect had already been reached in the temple of Bhubaneswar; or, that Hinduism was, already, so far doomed to decline that this last great scheme of the Hindu kings could not be allowed to materialise; that the worship offered and the homage made were, for some reason, not acceptable. Indeed, there are those who even pin-point this reason—depiction in the relief work of the temple of subjects which, according to the ordinarily accepted standard in such matters, are grossly obscene.

Take Percy Brown, for instance, who has written such an eloquent account of this "grandest achievement of the Eastern School of architecture". In his opinion there are "clear proofs that it was never quite completed". He concedes that the superb craftsmanship of the artisans at that period almost succeeded in completing 'this stupendous undertaking'. But, "as if the powers of good resented the perpetuation of the evil it portrays, it now lies a colossal ruin." And what was the evil it portrayed ? He explains : "Finally, to add to the richness of its appearance, as well as to the mysterious nature of its ceremonial, the builders have filled out the pattern of this great structural composition by means of sculptured forms and intricate designs applied without stint to its immense surfaces, some of outstanding beauty, but others of such a shamelessly erotic character that they have no parallel in any known building."[8]

That, incidentally, is the clue to half the attraction of Konark—these sculptured forms of a "shamelessly erotic character". As we shall see, divergent views are held by critics on this matter of erotic sculpture. In the opinion of some, all such art is wicked and a symbol of the powers of darkness, while for others it constitutes a "hymn to life", is a joyous portrayal of a great and high philosophy. But whether all this was plain obscenity or a complex ritual, a graphic delineation of a new path to paradise or no more than pandering to the passions in an effort to popularise some creed or to fill the temple's coffers, one can hardly ignore what one sees. We shall consider this whole matter later in its due place and at full length, and examine the various explanations and interpretations, good, bad and indifferent, which are offered in this context. Here, let us merely indicate that this element constitutes an immense attraction for the visitors and accounts for much of the fame, or notoriety, which the Black Pagoda enjoys.

To revert to the point that some people believe that the obscene carvings are the reason why this temple could not be completed or why the high gods struck the temple with ruin. Of course, all this hardly explains why temples carrying the same kind of sculptures at Puri or Bhubaneswar, nearby, or at Khajuraho

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and elsewhere in India, have not fallen down. Indeed, there might have been greater force of logic in saying that it is the temples of the Sun which have met with a similar fate all over the country. At Mudhera in Gujarat or Martand in Kashmir and Multan (now in Pakistan), where not a sign remains of the temple of the Sun described in glowing terms by Hieun-Tsang, or here at Konark it is the same sad tale of ruin and disaster. Anyway, and whatever the explanation, the fact remains that while temple after great temple stands intact at Tanjore or Madurai, Bhubaneswar or Khajuraho, stands whole and in the fulness of its glory, the Sun temple at Konark is and has been, for long, a ruin.

Yet, what a ruin ! For, even as a ruin it is far more of a miracle than many a monument which is still complete and unbroken. As it is, there is not another ruin in India to which as many people go and with such eager anticipation, and from which they receive greater satisfaction and deeper aesthetic pleasure than this deserted place on the far-off coast of Orissa ! By plane and train, by bus and car, on foot and in bullock carts, all day long, and throughout the year, a concourse of visitors from India and abroad, keeps on moving to what was once a temple of the Sun, and is now a temple of art and philosophy.

There are many reasons for the world's interest in this celebrated building. There is, in the first place, the well-conceived design of the monument. It is true that this temple corresponds to the conventional form of the Hindu temple, of the Orissan temple, of the time. It is similar to the temples of Bhubaneswar and Puri in respect of its form and components. But the builders of this monument have scored a point by making it a Sun temple obviously, through giving it the design of the celestial chariot of the Sun-god, and not merely by reference to the deity installed within, as is the case with other temples. Complete in every detail, this allegorical representation is satisfying in the extreme, both artistically and intellectually. The massive car of the great deity, stands, or rather races, through the heavens, on twenty-four wheels, a dozen on either side, and is drawn by seven richly caprisoned and finely carved horses. Each wheel represents a fortnight and each horse a day of the week. The wheels are examples of superb workmanship, are marvels of sculpting. The carving is so rich and varied that one is astonished by this display of infinite love and labour lavished on each minute detail. And what is true of the work on the wheels is true equally of the rest of the job. The horses, for instance, count among the finest of their kind in the world. All in all, the idea conceived so boldly was executed beautifully and worked out in several ways. For, in addition to the meaningful shape of the temple, the theme and scheme of the sculpture stress the same concept.

The structural plan, then, is the first attribute of this great sanctuary which commands our attention and admiration. Next, there is the sculptural element. Like the temples of Khajuraho this monument belongs to that phase in the temple-art of India during which sculpture and architecture are one. Each is

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complementary to the other, and the entire building is such a well integrated item that it is difficult to point out where architecture ends and sculpture begins. The temple is, indeed, one carved surface, with not an inch which is unsculpted. Wherever the eye wanders, there is ornament of the kind that adds lustre and life to the monument. Had the temple of Konark been made in the shape and to the size it was, but without the sculpture it carries, even then it would have been a most impressive structure, such are its proportion and grace. With the sculptures it has, it becomes one of the most rewarding of art-works the earth boasts of. For, the plastic work is not merely an ornament that helps to set off the sparkle of the jewel, but is a part of the total scheme, is essential to the theme of the monument, has meaning and significance, in the general outline as well as in each detail, in the context of its being a temple and a sun-temple. The Hindu temple is no idle work of idle hands. It is the House of God and many complex symbols are associated with it. It is made in the shape of the Body or the World Mountain, representing symbolically the universe, is, as a microcosm, a replica, in every detail, of the macrocosm, of the universe that we see around us. As such, its walls depict, as one aspect of its concept, a picture of the universe consisting of birds and flowers, and animals and men, and denizens of the various heavens, as well as the high gods—all manifestations of the Supreme Being of the Self. Additionally, in the case of the Sun Temple, the significance of such representation of everything is that the monument carries all that the deity sees on his daily round of the world. The massive carving of a whole universe, of the total activity of life, is like a hymn of praise which the Earth voices forth to the god who blesses her with radiance and refulgence as well as with fruition and fertility.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that every detail of this scheme of sculpture has been attended to with skill and thoroughness. It is never forgotten that this, every inch of it, is the residence of the Divine, and so, whatever is has to be perfect, and is perfect. Nothing is ever put as a part of the temple but has its meaning and due place. There is no question, therefore, of being casual about anything, be it a line on a leaf or the breast of a woman. All that we see is there because of the scriptural injunctions, is consecrated, and has to be set and executed to perfection. That is why we see example after example, and in each field, of sculpture which is breath-takingly beautiful. Things or beings, whatever has been chiselled has been exquisitely chiselled.

Two of these fields of work deserve special notice—which means that, whatever their reason for doing that, the builders chose to place particular emphasis on them in the total scheme. One of these is the sculpture relating to feminine beauty. Lovely females, standing in alluring stances and poses which are described in the classics relating to such subjects, grace the walls. They personify the intention with which woman was created. Symbolising beauty and sexual attraction, these women of Konark are a most happy creation, and

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such light and joy suffuse their limbs and faces as can be explained only with reference to the Philosophy of Great Delight, of *Bhog* as *Yog*, which had then come into vogue. Those who shy at the sight of the erotic but consider the woman beautiful as legitimate art will be delighted to look at these lovely figures and enjoy the completely frank display of the sensuous in the female beauty which the artists of Konark have not only attempted to portray but succeeded in presenting with success.

The second is the great erotic sculpture of Konark. The only other place which can rival Konark in this is Khajuraho. But then at Khajuraho there is a group of temples which put their work together to contend against what the creators of Konark offer. Konark, on the other hand, has only one temple and that also in ruins. In addition there is this point to note that Konark's robust erotic sculpture exuding energy which the Sun personifies is far superior to the work at Khajuraho. About the erotic sculpture of Khajuraho, there is a certain elegance and a certain urbanity; yet it is work which, though it rises to great heights of beauty, never attains to those of grandeur. At Konark, the sculpture is really great and there is an aura of grandeur about all that we see there. Indeed, the great beauty of men and women of Konark affords the most convincing argument in favour of the philosophies which are supposed to explain the presence of erotic sculpture on Hindu temples. If it is necessary that the body should vibrate with tremendous zest and desire then, symbolically, the erotic sculpture of Konark proves the point better and presents the allegory and drives home the moral in a more pronounced manner than the erotic sculpture of Khajuraho does. It is not fair always to make comparisons, not fair either to the things which are being compared or to the one who is making the comparison, especially to the present writer who has already written in praise of Khajuraho. Yet, it is obvious that the quality of Khajuraho's sculpture is inclined more to the decadent and the picturesque than to the vibrant and the vigorous. It is stylised, ornamental, has a certain grace and a stamp of virtuosity, but the vigour and the voluptuousness we associate with the 'classical' is to be seen only in the men and women of the *mithuns* at Konark. For the rest, all the notes of the symphony of the sex-act are presented on this site and there is not an inch or corner which is left untouched by the erotic. If the cult of the body makes one as strong of limb as the men and women here appear to be; if the religion of desire gives us such strength and vigour as we find portrayed here; and if the indulgence of the senses can bestow such joy and serenity as we witness here, then all this is justification enough for the philosophy these sculptures present.

And thus it comes about that because of the great design to which the temple is built, the integration of architecture and sculpture into one artistic unit, the amazing skill with which the entire work of carving has been done, and the tremendous variety and the loveliness of the sculpture—which are there not anyhow but are planned and thought out to the last detail even of the carving in

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the spokes of each wheel where now we find the *mithun* and now the beautiful women since life is sustained by these—we find that even in its bare remnants this colossal, this most magnificent, ruin of India, spells infinite glory. It offers an aggregate of beauties and splendours which are a living tribute to its makers and bring great credit and honour to Indian art. Scattered like pieces of a shattered mirror, the resplendent fragments of this dream in stone reflect the amazing genius of those who conceived it and the perfect skill of those who carved it.

As we shall see in the following pages, this temple of the Sun is associated with the miraculous in myth and legend. But even if one dismisses all that as figments of fancy, who can deny that it bears a relationship to the miraculous in its architecture and sculpture? Those who saw it whole, rising at the edge of the waters and lighted up by the golden rays of the Sun, must have been struck by its magic appearance. Such must have been the case especially with the sea-farers in whose vision it must have often come all of a sudden, creating for them the illusion of a miracle monument placed by some divine power, by the hands of fairies, on that sacred spot. Of this miracle of a monument one may say, without hesitation, that whatever the standard of judgement, and whoever the judge, the Sun Temple of Konark will be included in any list of half a dozen of the finest Indian buildings. And that because it is only a ruin. Had it stood complete and intact as the Lingraj does or the Kandarya Mahadev, or the Taj, one might have added that it was not among India's best but the best she had.

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2. MYTH AND LEGEND

THERE IS HARDLY A THING or a place in India which does not have some myth or legend associated with it. For every mountain, river, rock or tree, for every forest and each flower, there is bound to be some story or the other woven around its existence. The founding of each city and village has its basis, some charming tale to account for its being. Similarly, each monument, single temple or a group of these, will have an explanation for its construction.

Our scriptures are replete with these tales and stories of religion which served, and still serve for many, the purpose our novels and romances serve, conferring such additional merit as accrues from hearing the sacred word. Konark has, of course, its own full quota of these. In his description of the temple, Abul Fazl refers to this matter. According to him, there were in all twenty-eight temples in the vicinity of the great monument. Six of these were in front of the entrance and twenty-two without the enclosure, "each of which has its separate legend", and "they are all reported to have performed miracles". We do not know what temples stood there at that time nor the miracles associated with them. But we do have accounts of a few miracles relating to Konark. In fact, the myths and legends about this monument, a veritable miracle of art, seem to revolve around the 'miraculous'.

The most important of these legends is connected with the belief that the light of the sun is a cure for leprosy. Three great names are linked with the worship of the Sun-god on this account: Samb, son of Lord Krishn; Mayur, celebrated poet of King Harshvardhan, who having been cured of this dire disease through the favour of this deity, composed a great poem of hundred stanzas in praise of the Sun; and the Ganga King Narsingh I. All three are said to have suffered from leprosy and two of them are directly associated with the monument at Konark—Samb as its builder in myth and legend, and Narsingh in history.

The story related about Samb makes delightful reading and every word of it is in keeping with the spirit of all Pauranic tales. Stirling summarises the legend thus: "The deity of the place is called by the vulgar Sooraj Deo (Surya), and at full length, Chander Sooraj Birinji Narayan. The origin of the worship of a

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divinity so little honoured in India generally speaking, is ascribed to Samba, the son of Krishna, who having been afflicted with leprosy and banished from his father's Court at Dwarka, as a punishment for accidentally looking in upon the nymphs of the palace whilst sporting naked in the water, was cured at this spot by the Sun, to whose service he in gratitude raised a temple."[1]

But this is flat and colourless in comparison with the full account given in the Puran. According to this, the first act of the drama is laid in Dwarka during the golden age of Krishn's rule. Then a new order of things had replaced the old customs and manners and laws. In the land in which, thanks to the magic and power of Krishn's rule, there was nothing but peace and plenty, Krishn wanted men and women to live not through the philosophy of penance and self-mortification, which was the old way of achieving salvation, but to follow the easy and the natural course of fulfilling their desires. Let men and women follow their instinct without inhibition, without taboo. Love was the path to liberation. Delight of the senses would make one oblivious to the limits of time and place and, steeped in bliss, one could almost sing one's way to *nirvan*. Liberation through love, the ecstasy, not of *Yog*, but of *Bhog*—this was the new path, the path of *mukti* through *bhukti*. And so the men and women were free to tread this primrose path of alliance to paradise and deliverance. Krishn himself had a large number of wives, thousands of them, each more beautiful than the other, and more attractive, more youthful than the *apsaras* of Indr's heaven. And although the others did not or could not maintain such large harems they could at least free themselves from the responsibility of conventional 'faithfulness', and find pleasure in the arms of men and women other than their own spouses. Thus licensed, the people of Dwarka left nothing of their desires ungratified. All around, it was eternal spring; all through the year it was time for love and worship of the flesh .

Now, Krishn had a son named Samb who was as handsome as Kamdev. But this Samb was rather indiscreet for, one day, meeting that grand old man of Hindu mythology, the sage Narad, he scoffed at him saying : "O Narad, what a pity that you should be so old, that you cannot do what others can do in the reign of Krishn. All around, there are pleasures and delights which youth can enjoy. Is it not a tragedy that you cannot savour this sweetness ?"

Narad was hurt, and, as the young prince went away to make merry with his women, the cunning sage, known in many a myth and story to be the cause of endless trouble and the source of much dissension which he cheerfully goes about sowing the seed of, hit upon a plan to take his revenge. After a day or so, he called Samb and promised him a visit to a secret place where he would see women of great beauty and matchless passion, who would give him such pleasures of the flesh as he had not known. Samb was taken in by this attractive offer and making him pass through a secret door, Narad put him into the harem of Krishn where countless female beauties reclined on a floor of flowers

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exuding a voluptuous fragrance and presenting, all in all, a sight of fine breasts and fair limbs which made one lose one's very senses. Samb could not help gazing at them and they in turn looked in wonder at his lust-evoking body. Desire arose on both sides and this man and those women ran towards one another.

But, as this was happening, there appeared, in their midst, Krishn himself. Narad had gone and brought him after having left Samb in the women's quarters of Krishn's palace. Krishn naturally believed what he was made to believe; that Samb, his own son, had behaved treacherously towards those who were like his mother. He was angry and, as a punishment, pronounced, in a voice full of thunder and ire, a curse upon the son. He desired that Samb be struck by leprosy so that his beauty and youth would be gone, his flesh would rot and his very sight would become detestable. In vain did Samb protest that he was innocent, that Narad had beguiled him into the palace, that he had not meant to betray his father. Although Krishn now understood the matter better and his anger was gone, yet there was nothing he could do against his own curse. What had been uttered must be fulfilled, and Samb had to suffer as one afflicted by leprosy. However, Krishn said to him that he should go and live in the solitude of the wood and pray to Surya, the Sun-god, who alone could grant him a cure for his affliction.

And so Samb went away to the woods and living for twelve years all alone and in perfect chastity of body and mind, he worshipped Surya day after day. Then one day, while he was bathing, Samb saw the Sun-god appearing in person on the waves of the waters of the pool in which he was bathing. The god vanished very quickly leaving behind a white lotus as mark of his favour. When Samb bent to pick the flower, he saw his reflection; and, lo and behold! he had been cured of the disease and was, once again, as beautiful as he had been on the day on which the curse had been pronounced. Happy and grateful, Samb vowed that he would build a temple to the god who had restored to him his youth and beauty. He then left the place and wandering along came to the sea-shore to the spot known as Konark, *corner of the Sun,* where he built this famous Sun-temple.

According to another source, Samb became a leper under the curse not of his father but of the sage Durvasa and so afflicted he went away to the Panjab. There through prayer and penance he propitiated the Sun-god and was cured of his disease. He then built a temple dedicated to the Sun on the bank of the river Chenab, ancient Chandra-bhaga, and is credited with having introduced the worship of the Sun.

It appears that this prince, Samb, was a really ill-starred youth. Through his mad pranks he not only brought trouble upon himself but also upon his relatives and was finally the cause of the total extinction of the race to which he belonged. He is said to have lived a dissolute life at Dwarka and made fun of
10 sacred things. Once he and his companions played a practical joke on the three

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great sages, Vishvamitr, Durvasa and Narad. Samb allowed himself to be dressed up as a pregnant woman and to be taken to these sages who were asked as to whether the child would be a boy or girl. In their anger the sages said: "This son of Krishn, masquerading as a woman, will bring forth an iron club which shall destroy the whole race of Yadus." The prophecy came true and Samb did bring forth an iron club. This was pounded and thrown into the sea. One piece of this remained uncrushed and passing through the belly of a fish was later used to serve as the tip of the fatal arrow which a hunter aimed mistakenly at Krishn. The powdered portion of the iron club which had been cast into the sea produced rushes which when plucked turned into clubs or reeds that served as swords. And all these weapons were employed in the mad internecine killing which ended the race of the Yadus.

The Sun is recognised again and again as the god whom those afflicted by leprosy must propitiate. Another victim of this disease, Mayur, poet of King Harsh's court, was also cured, like Samb, through the grace of Surya in whose honour he had composed his celebrated century of verses known as *Suryashatak*. Curiously enough, Mayur, too, had contracted leprosy as a consequence of a curse, and the curse itself was—coincidence indeed!—connected with the leprosy of the mind, with sexual 'immorality'. There are two versions and both centre around Mayur's daughter. According to one of these, the poet was enamoured of her and she cursed him for having such an unnatural desire. The other form of this story is that Ban, famous poet of Harsh who was Mayur's son-in-law, had been treated, one particular night, rather standoffishly by his wife. She was playing the proud lady and all entreaty and endeavour on Ban's part failed to move her. Dawn was breaking but the lady was still in no mood to grant her favours. The Poet had made, as poets will, a verse to express the situation and he thought of reciting that to her. He was doing that when Mayur came into the house on a visit. He heard the first three lines and before Ban could read the closing line he had composed, Mayur spoke out to complete the verse on his own: "The heart has hardened on account of its closeness to the hard breasts." This indirect reference to the hardness of his own daughter's breasts—a great asset in the female body and an essential of feminine beauty—infuriated Ban who cursed the father, and it was to work off the effect of this curse that Mayur wrote the *Suryashatak*. Incidentally, Mayur, in turn, cursed Ban who propitiated the goddess, Durga, to rid himself of his own misfortune, and composed the *Chandishatak* in her praise.

Like all great things, great poetry too, it seems, springs often from such trivial sources !

But let us revert to the legends connected with Konark. It seems that one legend is not good enough for such a grand structure, so there is another connected with its actual construction. O.C. Ganguli narrates it thus: "Bishnu Maharaj, the master-architect who designed and built this edifice, left his home for many years leaving behind his new born son, and the wife trained the young man in

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the technique of his father's craft. When he was old enough, the young architect, Dharampada by name, went in search of his father who had for these many years forgotten to return home having become so engrossed in the building of the temple. The story goes that owing to a mistake in calculation, the old master-builder was unable to place the Amalaka crown in position as the finishing touch to the ready-made structure, and its completion was delayed, arousing the wrath of the king. The young son came to the rescue of his old father, and adjusting the calculation, happily finished the tower, but to save the reputation of the old man, he committed suicide by drowning himself in the waters of the river Chandravaga which ran by the site."

Contrary to the conjecture of some critics that the temple was never completed, this story would have us believe that the structure was perfected to detail. How and when did then ruin seize it ? For that too we have a story of sorts. It is believed that, concealed in the stone-masonry at the top, there was a most powerful loadstone, so powerful that it would pull all the ships passing within a certain radius towards the shore and so cause endless disaster. Once the sailors of a ship decided to undo this source and cause of trouble, and, stealing ashore under cover of darkness, pulled down the building. In his account of the 'Religion', Antiquities, Temples and Civil Architecture, of Orissa, Andrew Stirling remarks in this connection as follows :

"The natives of the neighbouring villages have a strange fable to account for its desertion. They relate that a Kumbha Pathar or loadstone, of immense size, was formerly lodged on the summit of the great tower, which had the effect of drawing ashore all vessels passing near the coast. The inconvenience of this was so much felt that, about two centuries since, in the Mogul time, the crew of a ship landed at a distance and stealing down the coast, attacked the temple, scaled the tower, and carried off the loadstone. The priests, alarmed at this violation of the sanctity of the place, removed the image of the god with all his paraphernalia to Puri, where they have ever since remained, and from that date the temple became deserted and went rapidly to ruin."[3]

He then gives the commonsensical view of the matter : "The origin of its dilapidation may obviously be ascribed either to an earthquake or to lightning, but many causes have concurred to accelerate the progress of destruction, once a beginning had been made. To say nothing of the effects of weather on a deserted building, and of the vegetation that always takes root under such circumstances, it is clear that much injury has been done by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, in forcing out the iron clamps which held the stones together, for the sake of the metal; and it is well known that the officers of the Marhatta government actually beat down a part of the walls, to procure materials for building some insignificant temples at Puri."

But that is like putting the cart before the horse. A temple must first be built before it can tumble down, whether through wicked wilful acts of man or

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the ravages of Time and Nature. Let us, therefore, now turn from legend to history, and from Samb to Narsingh I, illustrious ruler of the Ganga dynasty, who is credited with the construction of this "lasting monument to his own fame". It is said that he, too, was afflicted with leprosy, and had been cured through propitiating the Sun, which might explain why he built a temple to a deity whose worship was no longer in vogue. But all this is rumour and conjecture and there is as poor a foundation of truth for this story as there is for the others we have examined in this chapter. On the other hand, almost all historians agree that Narsingh I was, indeed, the builder of this celebrated temple.

This king had come to the throne during a period of great turmoil. All over India, the Muslim conquerors were crushing the native kings and chieftains and taking over as the country's rulers. Already, they were masters of the entire North and of some parts of Bengal. Orissa had so for escaped the notice of the iconoclast because it lay far away from the path of the invaders. Now, there was danger even for Orissa. A great and courageous king, Narsingh Dev took to the offensive instead of waiting to be attacked. He inflicted a good deal of losses on the enemy during several campaigns, and both through bravery in battlefield and brilliance in strategy, he won for himself great glory and renown. History records nothing about his suffering from the fell illness which the Sun is supposed to cure. In the view of this Muse, it was to mark his achievements as a warrior and to offer his gratitude to the gods that he built this monumental temple.

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3 THE BUILDERS

MOST HISTORIANS AND CRITICS hold the view that the Sun Temple of Konark was built around the middle of the 13th century A.D. by Narsingh I of the dynasty known in Indian history as the Eastern Gangas, and comes as the climax and culmination of several centuries of artistic development. There are, however, two notable exceptions—one a historian, Abul Fazl, Akbar's able minister; and the other that great art-historian and critic, James Fergusson. Abul Fazl mentions Narsingh as the builder but puts the date of this king's reign and the Sun Temple's construction several hundred years earlier than 13th century. "It is said," he recorded towards the end of the 16th century in the Ain-i-Akbari, "that somewhat over 730 years ago, Raja Narsingh Deo completed this stupendous fabric and left this mighty memorial to posterity."[1] And Fergusson's opinion is that Konark is not a 13th century but a 9th century monument.

It appears that, as Fergusson remarks, the historians and critics have generally and blindly followed the lead given by Andrew Stirling who, in his account of Narsingh Deo, stated: "It was this Raja who built the famous temple of the Sun at Konark, called by the Europeans the Black Pagoda 'thereby', observes the Author of the Ayeen Akbery, 'erecting for himself a lasting monument of fame.' The work was executed chiefly under the superintendence of the minister Shibai Santra, and is stated to have been completed in the year of the Sacabda 1200, answering to 1277. A.D."[2] W.W. Hunter echoed this in his remarks on the subject; "The most exquisite memorial of Sun-worship is the temple of Konark upon the Orissa shore. The temple at Jagannath falls far short of this marvellous structure—which rose in honour of the Sun, fifty years later. Built, according to the most trusty records, between 1237 and 1282 A.D. shortly after the triumph of the graceful Vishnuite creed, it concentrates in itself the accumulated beauties of the four architectural centuries among the Hindus."[3]

In spite of the divergent opinion of Fergusson and his emphatically expressed complaint that in fixing the date of the temple Stirling had been followed blindly, critic after critic continued to accept this "hearsay" view of Stirling and Hunter on this point. Here is, for instance, Ananda Coomaraswamy: "The

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temple is not only unique as a temple, but is in itself both architecturally and in the details of its sculpture, one of the noblest monuments of Indian Mediaeval art. The date of its erection is said to be about 1250 A.D."[4] And Stella Kramrisch: "The ultimate possibility of this (development in respect of architecture and sculpture) reached in the Sun Temple at Konarak (thirteenth century)."[5] Or Percy Brown: "There now remains the grandest achievement of this Eastern School of architecture, the Temple of the Sun at Konarak...Built in the reign of King Narasinha-dev (1238-64), it has become a deserted ruin."[6] And S.K. Sarswati: "The celebrated Sun temple at Konarak, known as the black pagoda from its darkish colour seen from a distance, was built during the reign of Narsimha I (A.D. 1238-64). A noble conception initiated by a master mind and executed and finished by a master architect, it represents the crystallised and accumulated experience of several hundreds of years, and ably illustrates the fulfilment and finality of Orissan architectural movement."[7] And Benjamin Rowland: "The final achievement of Orissan builders is the Surya Deul or Temple of the Sun at Konaraka. This sanctuary was erected in the reign of Narsimha-deva (1238-64)."[8] In his introduction to the collection of Goswamy's pictures on the Sun Temple, O.C. Ganguly observes thus: "Erected sometime between 1238 and 1264 A.D. by King Narsimha Deva I of the Ganga dynasty, the Konarak Shrine, not only marks the culmination of the Kalinga style, in architecture and sculpture, but marks one of the highest water-marks in the history of India Art."[9]

And finally, Robert Ebersole in what is about the latest contribution on this theme : "Most famous among the successors of Choda Ganga was the Emperor Narsimha Deva I, who reigned from 1238 to 1264...It was Narsimha Deva who built the Black Pagoda at Konarak."[10]

Now, whereas there is little doubt that the Sun Temple was, in fact, built by Narsingh I during the 13th century and that the date *c.* 1250 ascribed to the temple is more or less correct, we cannot ignore the note of dissent voiced by Abul Fazl and by that far greater authority, Fergusson. Even where one does not agree with them, both these eminent writers deserve that their opinions should be given due attention.

Apropos Abul Fazl's statement, the explanation seems to be that Konark had been for long regarded as a sacred spot. It is one of the five important places of pilgrimage in an area every inch of which is holy land: "For two thousand years Orissa has been the Holy Land of the Hindus. The ancient texts love to dwell on its sanctity. It is 'the land that taketh away sin'. It is 'the realm established by the god,' and its Sanskrit name, Utkala-desa, literally the Glorious Country, has crystallized the devotional regard of forty generations. 'Of all the regions of the earth,' says an inspired sage in explaining the various places of pilgrimage to his pupils, 'India is the noblest; and of all the counties of India, Utkala boasts the highest renown.' "[11] And this "Utcala Desa", which, says Stirling,

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"is believed or fabled to be itself so holy a region throughout its entire extent, contains four places of pilgrimage of peculiar sanctity called the Hara Khetr, the Vishnu ot Pursottem Khetr, the Arka or Padma Khetr, and the Vijayi or Parvati Khetr, within the limits of which will be found nearly all that is curious and interesting in the Religious Antiquities of the province."[12]

It is probable, therefore, that there might have been continuous building activity over several centuries in the same area, and although this particular monument was put up only about three hundred years earlier by Narsingh, some of the structures there might have been as old as '730 years' before Abul Fazl's time. On the other hand, there is inexcusable error in placing Narsingh and '730 years' ago in the same sentence, for Abul Fazl was in a position to check the years of reign of Narsingh. It may also be pointed out that in ancient records of this kind there is a fair incidence of 'calligraphic' errors. These may occur when the dictation is misunderstood, when making out copies, or during transcription of figures and digits etc. of one system into those of another system. One wonders, therefore, if 730 got wrongly written, somehow, for 330

Perhaps the suggestion, which Rajendralala Mitra makes in passing, is as good an explanation as any for reconciling the two views on the date of the monument. Writing on Heliolatry, he says: "Every Brahmana worships the sun daily at his Sandhya, and no good Hindu performs a religious rite in which the sun does not obtain his share of mantras or offerings; but that is quite distinct from initiation into the mantra of the sun, and the acceptance of that divinity as the god elect for one's salvation. In this latter sense, the worship of the sun has all but completely ceased for near a thousand years, and no great temple has been dedicated to him within the last six hundred years. The Black Pagoda of Konarak was designed for him about the middle of the thirteenth century, but only to replace an older one which had become dilapidated."[13]

Fergusson's remarks deserve a far more serious examination and there is no mistaking his meaning. His view is based on the style of the monument, on the architecture of the building. And though one may be right or wrong in one's assessment, that after all is the correct way of arriving at any conclusion. Dating of ancient monuments is a tricky job, especially in India where the records are scanty, are at times deliberately falsified, and are almost always mixed with a great deal of myth, legend and hyperbole. To form one's opinion as to the date of construction because "according to the most trusted records," or because "it is said that", it was constructed at so-and so-time, can be misleading. That in this case, those who have followed this method happen to be right or Fergusson happens to be wrong is of little importance.

Fergusson argues the case as follows :

"Stirling does not hesitate in asserting that the present edifice, as is well known, was built by the Raja Langora Narsing Deo, in A.D. 1241, under the superintendence of his minister Shibai Santra, and every one who has since written on

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the subject adopts this date without hesitation, and the native records seem to confirm it. Complete as this evidence, at first sight, appears, I have no hesitation in putting it aside, for the simple reason that it seems impossible—after the erection of so degraded a specimen of the art as the temple of Puri (A.D. 1174) —the style ever could have reverted to anything so beautiful as this. In general design and detail it is so similar to the Jagamohan of the great temple of Bhubaneswar that at first sight I should be inclined to place it in the same century; but the details of the tower exhibit a progress towards modern forms which is unmistakable, and render a difference of date of two or possibly even three centuries more probable. Yet the only written authority I know of for such a date is that given by Abul Fazl. After describing the temple, and ascribing it to Raja Narsing Deo in A.D. 1241 with an amount of detail and degree of circumstantiality which has deceived every one he quietly adds that it is said "to be a work of 730 years antiquity. In other words, it was erected in A.D. 850 or A.D. 873, according to the date we assume for the composition of the Ayeen Akbery. If there was a king of that name among the *Rois faineants* of the Kesari line, this would suffice, but no such name is found in the lists. This, however, is not final; for in an inscription on the Brahmaneswar temple the queen, who built it, mentions the names of her husband, Udyalaka, and six of his ancestors; but neither he nor any of them are to be found in the lists except the first, Janmejaya, and it is doubtful whether even he was a Kesari king or the hero of the 'Mahabharata'. We have really nothing to guide us but the architecture, and its testimony is so distinct that it does not appear to me doubtful that this temple really belongs to the latter half of the 9th century."[14]

Even though the point which Fergusson makes with reference to the deterioration of the style evident in Puri's temple is good, the miracle is that the Sun Temple did come after that. Indeed, it is on account of the architectural and sculptural evidence that we may reject the 9th century as the date of its construction. Being, like all the later temples of Orissa, *panch-rath,* a fully-developed four-component unit, and large-sized like the Lingraj and the Jagannath, it cannot belong to the earlier phase. In respect of its sculpture also it shows a schematic treatment of themes and a preponderance of the feminine figure and the *mithun*— which are all later developments.

Although she does not allude to this directly in her treatment of the theme, Stella Kramrisch establishes on the same basis that the monument belongs to the 13th century. The error Fergusson made is in not appreciating sufficiently that in respect of architecture and sculpture, things had come full circle. In the earlier phase, a whole temple like that of Kailash at Ellora had been sculpted out of rock. Now again, architecture and sculpture are indistinguishable but this once the temple is sculpted all over. Another reason for the 'illusion' that this is the work of an earlier phase is that there is, in respect of the sculpture, a reversal and return to a trend peculiar to the "classical" period. Stella

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Kramrisch explains this point thus; "In the two following centuries (after the 11th century) form once more rests on its own weight. But the weightiness of this age (twelfth to thirteenth centuries) has a different gravity from that of the seventh century."[15]

We find, therefore, that both on the basis of the "most trusted records", as well as the evidence of its architecture and sculpture, the Sun Temple is, indeed, the culmination of several centuries of development and may be safely placed during the reign of Narsingh I in the 13th century.

Narsingh I was among the most illustrious of the Eastern Gangas who emerged as the rulers of Orissa in the 11th century when they replaced the Kesari dynasty—the 'Lion Kings'. The epithet 'Eastern' is used by the historians to distinguish this dynasty, which ruled in Orissa, from an earlier dynasty of the Gangas which ruled in Southern India. Some historians believe that there was a temporary eclipse of the dynasty towards the 10th century and they re-appeared after a while as the Eastern Gangas, and that both these earlier and later Gangas, the Southern and the Eastern, should be considered as constituting one dynasty. Others see no connection between the two except their common name and regard the Eastern Gangas as a new and independent dynasty. H.C. Ray holds emphatically to the first view. He says; "Kings who traced their descent to the Ganga-kula appear to have ruled in the territories round about the Mahendragiri, in the Ganjam district of the Madras Presidency, from about the 7th century onwards. These princes may be conveniently divided into an earlier and a later group. The names of the rulers of the first group usually end in *Varman*. They all claim to be lord of Sakala-Kalinga and devout worshippers of Gokarnesvara, who resided on the top of mount Mahendra. They continued to hold sway in the region about the southern portion of Ganjam district for about 300 years. They often assumed imperial titles, and on the whole appear to have been sovereign rulers. It is however likely that they may have suffered a temporary eclipse on account of the encroachments of the Karas of Tosali, some of whose grants were discovered in Ganjam.

"In the first half of the 11th century we find another series of kings claiming descent from the same line as the above. Like the first group of Ganga princes, they were also worshippers of Gokarnesvara on mount Mahendra. But unfortunately there are so many discrepancies in the genealogical lists supplied by the different grants that we cannot accept these calculations with absolute certainty. It is, however, possible that the forefathers of the earlier and later groups of the Gangas, if not identical, had at least migrated to Kalinga, about the same time. It is certain that they belonged to the same stock."[16]

These 'genealogical lists', especially the 'legendary' variety, are astounding stuff. These chronologies mix up the divine and the human, the imaginary and the factual, so well that they constitute a constant source of endless

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confusion and one does not know where to look for the grain in all this chaff. In his account of the dynasty, Dr Ray reproduces one such legendary table which begins with "Ananta Vishnu". "From his navel" we have "Brahman", and then "Atri," and "Shashank" (the Moon) and "Budha", "Pururavas"—hero of a great play by Kalidas—and so on. Of this table, Vajrahasta V, with whom authentic history begins, makes the 129th king !

According to Stirling, the story of the Gangas should begin with "Chaudganga" but much light has been thrown on the subject since he wrote his account and we can now safely begin with the King Vajrahasta who came to the throne in 1038. This according to Dr Ray is "the earliest known date of the later Gangas."

From now on we have a reasonably well authenticated account of these Gangas. Although there was danger to these Ganga kings from the rising Chola power in the South, it appears that very soon they were able to convert such opportunities as offered themselves to their profit. What is more, these Gangas appeared to be both capable ruler and stout warriors and, in addition, fairly astute-minded so that they knew where the political advantage lay for them. For instance, Vajrhastha married a Kalachuri princess named Vijay Mahadevi and through this alliance "consolidated his position and cemented the relations of Kalinga Mahakosala". After about 40 years of reign Vajrhastha died and was succeeded by his son Raja Raja. This king ruled for less than ten years and during this period was fighting constantly against Cholas and Chalukyas in the South and the later Somavanshis in Utkal in the North. Although Raja Raja did not live to see the fruits of his warfare with these various kingdoms, his son was able to conquer and annex territories of Vengi and Utkal. This illustrious son was Anant Varman Chaud-Ganga. He was born of Raja-Sundari, daughter of the great Rajendra Chola, and had thus inherited in his veins "the blood of both the virile Gangas and the stalwart Cholas." Historians have nothing but high praise for this king. According to Dr Ray, "During this long reign of more than 70 years the Gangas reached the height of their greatness. The Kendupatna plates referred to above tell us that Codaganga 'exacted tributes from all lands between the Ganga and the Gotama Ganga (Godavari)'.

"Codaganga's success in the domain of peace was perhaps greater than in war. The great temple of Jagannatha at Puri is a standing evidence of the artistic vigour and prosperity of Orissa under his reign. His patronage of religion and charities is also proved by the numerous inscriptions belonging to him, his family and officers. Though no poem of his age has come down to our time, his inscriptions show that Sanskrit and Telugu were well cultivated. Mr. M. Chakravarti drew attention to the astronomical work of Bhasvati, which according to the Suryasiddhanta was composed by Satananda of Purusottama (Puri) in Saka 1021 (*c.* 1099-1100 A.D.). According to commentators, he is said to have

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based his calculations on the meridian of his native city."[17]

Chaud-Ganga, who had several queens and a large family, was followed in rapid succession by several of his sons. First came his eldest son Kamarnave, in whose favour he had abdicated the throne. Kamarnave died without issue and was succeeded by his step brother Raghav in A.D. 1156. Raghav also died childless in 1170 A.D. and was succeeded by his step brother Raja Raja II. Raja Raja II is of some interest to us because it was during his reign that the great Vaishnav poet Jaidev flourished in Orissa and composed his famous poem Geet Govind. Although Jaidev was a court poet of King Lakshman Sen of Bengal, his life and his poetic work are associated with Jagannath Puri also. Considering the new cults of *mukti* through *bhakti* and of *nirvan* through *sansar*, and considering the growing importance and value of love and desire in religion, this fact of Jaidev's direct or indirect association with the Gangas assumes significance.

In 1192, there came to the throne, Anang Bhim II who was another son of Chaud Ganga. Stirling pays a magnificent tribute to this ruler: "After two short and unimportant reigns Raja Anang Bhim Deo, one of the most illustrious of the Princes of the Ganga Vansa line, ascended the Gajapati Sinhasan or throne of the Gajapatis, A.D. 1174...Raja Anang Bhim Deo may be called the Firoz Shah of the age and country, from the number and variety of public works executed by his orders for the benefit or ornament of his dominions."

During his reign, large areas of India, North, West and Centre, were being overwhelmed by Islamic invasions and by the end of the 12th century, Bengal and Bihar too had been occupied by the Muhammadans. The conquering general in this case was Ikhtiar-uddin Muhammad, son of Bakhtiar Khilji. The clouds were now due to burst over Orissa and during the rule of his successor Raja Raja III, the Muslim did invade the Gangas' country.

An account of this is given in the Tabaqat-i-Nasiri of Minhaj-i-Siraj. We learn that in 1205 A.D. Muhammad Bhaktyar sent the Khalji Amir Ahmad-i-Sheran and his brother Muhammad-i-Sheran "with a portion of his forces towards Lakhanor and Jaj-nagar." But Muhammad Bhaktyar died soon after and on receipt of this news the expedition returned forthwith without achieving anything.

Raja Raja III was succeeded by Anang Bhim III. During his reign, Bengal's Muslim ruler Khalji Ghiyas-ud-din Iwaz invaded Orissa but was defeated by the Ganga armies.

According to one chronicle, Mandal Punji, this king, "built or finished the temple of Jagannatha at Puri, surveyed the whole kingdom and made numerous grants." On this Dr Ray comments: "Excepting his liberality, none of these statements are corroborated by epigraphic evidence. It is however likely that the great temple of Jagannatha and the buildings connected with the shrine may have been actually finished during his reign."[18]

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Anang Bhim ruled from 1211 to 1238 A.D. when his son Narsingh I succeeded him. By the time Narsingh I became the ruler of this area, the Muhammadans had taken possession of quite a chunk of what was then known as Radha (roughly the present State of West Bengal). Nevertheless, some parts of the present Hoogly and Nadia districts were still unconquered. Believing that offence was the best part of defence, Narsingh launched several campaigns against the Mohammadans. In these campaigns he won some brilliant victories and his success in the field of battle enabled this part of India to enjoy freedom from Muslim rule for another century or two.

To mark his victories and military successes he put up the magnificent temple which has given him far greater and more lasting fame than what he achieved through his military campaigns. As Ray puts it: "But the achievement which has immortalised his name was neither his victory over the Muslims nor his matrimonial alliance with the Malava king, but his construction of the great Black Pagoda at Konarak. All the copper-plates of his successors agree in ascribing to him the erection of the Sun-temple at Kona-kona, which place subsequently came to be known as Konarka or Konarak."[19]

Dr Sahu says: "Narasimha I, the son of Anangabhima III by his wife Kasturadevi, came to the throne in 1238 A.D. He was by far the greatest ruler of the Imperial Ganga line and his name used to strike terror into the hearts of the Muslim Governors of Bengal and Oudh...The Kendupatna Copper plate states: "The white river Ganga blackened for a great distance by the collyrium washed away by tears from the eyes of the weeping Yavanis of Radha and Varendra, and rendered waveless, as if by this astonishing achievement, was now transformed by that monarch (Narsimha I) into the black-watered Yamuna." And yet, "The greatest achievement of Narasimha I is the magnificent temple of the Sun at Konarak (Chandrabhaga), which is considered to be 'the very culmination of aesthetic beauty'."[20]

Another scholar, K.C. Panigarhi pays the following eloquent tribute to the builder of Konark: "All historians are agreed that the reign of Narasimha I (1238-1264 A.D.) is a glorious period in the history of Orissa. By the middle of the thirteenth century epoch-making changes had taken place in India. The Muslims had conquered the whole of the north-west and northern and most parts of the neighbouring Bengal. The victorious armies of Islam had carried everything before them and there was scarcely any power strong enough to check their advance even for a while. It seemed that the Hindu kingdom of Orissa nestling in the eastern coast would soon be over-run by them. But Narasimha I started taking the offensive as the best means of defence...In the fight that ensued at Katasin, the frontier outpost of Mussulman Bengal, the Muslim army under Malik Izzuddin was completely routed...This emboldened Narasimha to undertake a series of attacks on Muslim Bengal, and the southern districts of Bengal such as Midnapur, Howrah and Hooghly became part of the kingdom of Orissa...

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"The great temple at Konarak should be judged against this historical background. Narasimha's successful fight with the Muslims must have raised his prestige in the eyes of the contemporary Hindu Kingdoms and also his subjects. A monument to be built by him must therefore be in keeping with such a prestige. In fact, this temple might have been meant to represent both a shrine and the Kirthi-stambha of that great monarch."[21]

Several kings followed Narsingh I and the dynasty carried on till the early years of the 15th century. None of these kings, however, achieved anything worth mentioning either in the field of peace or war and for all practical purposes the story and glory of the Ganga dynasty end with the builder of Konarak.

From the above account of the Eastern Gangas, three points of importance emerge. In the first place, it is noteworthy that they were all of them great builders and munificent patrons of the Vaishnav faith. Secondly, they brought with them the culture and art-style of South India. It is generally claimed that Orissa is the link between the South and the North and, as we shall see in a later chapter, in respect of Konark's architecture and sculpture this had an important bearing on the matter. Finally, and as we have already noted in passing above, these kings flourished in a period of great religious upheaval, and one during which new and novel movements were taking hold of the people's mind. Thanks to this mighty challenge from a militant creed, namely Islam, a great religious fervour appears to have been engendered and whole people seem to have been caught by this wave of religious enthusiasm. It is this which explains why such great temples came up in this region during this phase. At Bhubaneswar, and Puri and Konark and Jajpur and Cuttack and elsewhere, monuments after great monuments were built during these four centuries of the Ganga rule.

It is often said that although literature may reflect the mind of the upper classes of a society, art represents the popular trends. In the building of monuments, certainly, the entire community is involved. After all it is not the king or the patron who builds the temple even if he is called the builder. He may have funds for the work and he may have an interest and, because of his wealth and patronage, the people may be encouraged to engage themselves in the activity which is so patronised by the king or the state. Nevertheless, the real builders are the craftsmen and it is a tribute to the Indian craftsman of the age that he was able to put up such wonderful work for which generations have been and will continue to be grateful.

But we know so little about the craftsmen or the people generally. As Mazumdar points out; "There are references in the epigraphic records of the Gangas to the contemporary Mahomedan Rulers or Generals, but relating to the people of the country we are absolutely in the dark." We must, therefore, be content with vague generalisations.

These craftsmen were hereditary and they formed guilds of their own for each different aspect of the work connected with temple building. It appears that

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the skilfulness of these people was so much in the blood and the family that even the wife of the craftsman could instruct the children into the art and this so wonderfully well that the son could rectify the error which a father might make.[22]

Thanks to the caste system, the craftsman had at his disposal a wealth of knowledge, experience and skill which had been passed on from father to son for untold generations. The members were able to work in perfect security and so to achieve their best. The canons in the Shilp Shastras had made elaborate studies of art and architecture and there were complete instructions as to what was to be done. In the words of Stella Kramrisch; "Nothing is left to chance in this art, which is completely aware of its means and purpose. The volumes are enclosed by planes and lines which are almost mathematically defined. Each subject has its proper place, each place its meaning, and each figure its function."[23] The Orissan artists had centuries-long experience of temple building, and this art and its techniques had been developed to a very high level of excellence both in respect of architecture and sculpture. If we add to this the fact that the resources of a powerful kingdom were placed at the disposal of these craftsmen, we can understand why they were able to build such a marvellous structure.

Finally, the builders were worshippers of the Sun—even if with a difference. The temple of Konark is the last monument to sun-worship and, of course, the finest in the whole world. The worship of this deity is an age-old creed, but it had undergone a sea-change since its earliest, Vedic, form. Once Surya was among the chief gods, in his own right but now Vishnu had come on top, and what is more, started absorbing the other deities, including Surya, as mere attributes of himself. Correctly speaking, the deity of the Konark monument is not Surya but Vishnu-Surya.

Hunter explains how Surya was absorbed by Vishnu in Orissa: "The most exquisite memorial of Sun-worship in India, or I believe in any country, is the temple of Konarak upon the Orissa shore...Sun-worship in Orissa formed one of the religions into which Buddhism disintegrated; a religion of the Vishnuvite type, identified with the Vishnuvite Dynasty, opposed to the dark rites of the Sivaite kings, and destined, after running a brief but beautiful course, to give place to the warmer form of Vishnuvism represented by Jagannath. From the earliest times, Vishnuvism and Sun-worship stand together in close affinity; indeed, in the Vedas, Vishnu, who afterwards developed into the second deity of the Hindu Triad, appears only as a form of the Sun. We catch the last glimpse of Orissa Sun-worship in the Royal Annals of the fourteenth century; and after that date Jagannath remains supreme...Buddhism, Sivaism, Sun-worship, thus each in turn became the prominent faith of the Province, and after a time gave place to some other creed. Jagannath was destined to hold a more permanent sway; and his priests, by skilfully working upon the Indian passion for pilgrimage,

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have for six centuries made Orissa the Terra Sancta of the Hindus. He owes his long reign to that plasticity which admits the whole Hindu pantheon within his walls, and which during six hundred years has ever instinctively accommodated itself to the changing spirit of the times. In the very act of superseding Sun-worship and Sivaism, his priests built temples to the wife of the All-Destroyer, and to the Sun, within his sacred Courts."[24]

Authorities are of the opinion that the first temple of the Sun was put up in Multan in the reign of Kanishk in the 2nd century A.D.; and the first architectural activity in Orissa began as early as the third century B.C. when the first elephant at Dhauli was sculpted. In between several great temples to the Sun had been raised in India at Martand, Mudhera, Gwalior etc.; and in Orissa great monuments like the Lingraj had been constructed. The builders of Konark, therefore, had all the knowledge and skill and models they wanted. And since they were out to build a monument worthy of the Sun as well as king Narsingh, naturally, they built the best and the finest in both categories—the finest of the Sun temples and the best among the Orissan monuments.

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4 CHARIOT OF THE SUN

The Sun temple of Konark is the last of the countless temples of Orissa and as such it represents the culmination of several centuries of the art of temple building in this region. These temples are predominantly of the type known as the *Nagar* or the North Indian. And in that they constitute perhaps the purest specimens. Again, considering that this part of the country did not experience such drastic and deadly devastation as North India, we find in the monuments still standing in Orissa a complete record of the beginnings, development and the full flowering of the Orissan temple; indeed, of the North Indian temple as a whole. Beginning with some ruined examples like the Lakshmaneshwar, the Bharateshwar and the Shatrughaneshwar, all situated close to the Rameshwar temple, and ending with this other, far-famed and magnificent ruin of the Sun Temple, the extant temples of Orissa roughly span a period of six centuries. During these six hundred years, the Hindu temple developed from an unpretentious, small, low-roofed single-component structure, which served to house the idol, into a complex of palatial, lofty and imposing buildings, planned and put up in accordance with a highly evolved religious and metaphysical significance of the temple, and constructed and decorated in accordance with elaborate canons and injunctions formulated into what is known as the *Shilp-Shastr*, the Science of Building.

The earliest concept of the temple was, as has been indicated above, merely that of a sanctum which housed the idol for worship. We have several examples of this at Sanchi, his Aihole, Tigawa, Nachna and elsewhere. Then the flat-roofed temple begins to develop into the *Nagar*, through examples like the Das-Avtar temple at Devgarh, the brick temple at Bhitargaon, the Mahadev temple at Nachna and the Lakshman temple at Sirpur. All these show the rudimentary form of the temple and yet even in these, the lines along which the development was to take place can be seen. A porch has been added and some ornaments put on the outside. The later temples will grow and develop along these fundamentals. The structures will become larger, and of course, higher, and more components will be added and there will be greater ornamentation, elaborate sculpture—to such an extent that in the best examples the outside of

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the temples becomes one fully sculpted surface with not an inch which is bare. The porch became necessary very early in the development because the Hindu concept of worship is not that of congregational prayers but of the individual's almost direct confrontation with the deity—that is why the *garbh-grih*, the cella, where the idol is installed is a comparatively small apartment. The porch—*Jagmohan* or *mukhmandap*—served as a kind of waiting hall in which those who had to take their turn could stay, while the man who was within the sanctuary was having *darshan* of the god and paying his homage and offering his worship. These two components, therefore, the sanctum and the porch became the more important parts and constituted the essentials of the Hindu temple. In later developments, two more portions are added namely, the *Natya Mandir*, the Dancing Hall and the *Bhog Mandir*, the Hall of Offerings. This is the period when, in the course of religious development, the gods had come to be treated almost like kings upon earth, and the temple was regarded as the deity's house. And just as a king would live in state and splendour so it was befitting that the god should be housed in a way which was in keeping with his position and dignity. Just as a king would need to be entertained, would have offerings made to him or music or dance performed before him, so in the temple of the god provision was made for similar matters. Panigrahi sums this up well: "In Orissa, as in other parts of India the ideas about religious structures had become greatly changed in the late mediaeval period. They were no longer the humble flat-roofed structures of the Gupta period.....The ideas about the worship and statues of presiding deities also became changed in the late mediaeval period. A presiding deity was to live in state as much as a king would do. He was to have an audience hall (Jagamandir). He was to be provided with the dancing hall (Bhogamandir). He was to be provided with the dancing girls, musical parties, silk clothes and gold ornaments, elephants, horses, cows, palanquins and above all, estates to defray regal expenditure on his daily worship and offerings."[1]

Before we proceed to the consideration of how the temple art in Orissa developed, it is necessary to deal with the categories of the Hindu temple, as a whole, so that we can fit the Orissan temples in the total story. Among other things, this will help us to appreciate the contribution made by the Orissan craftsmen. The Hindu temple is usually divided into three categories: the *Dravidian*, the *Nagar* and the *Vesar*. The term Dravidian would indicate that the classification is on geographical basis and that is why most critics use the term South Indian and North Indian instead of *Dravid* and *Nagar*. It is true that the *Dravid* style is limited to the South Indian peninsula, and that, in the rest of India, the temples conform to the other main category, that is the *Nagar*. The *Vesar*, the third type, is rather rare and is a kind of hybrid partaking of the elements of both the main categories. In practice, therefore, there are but two chief categories, the *Dravid* and the *Nagar*, the South Indian and the North

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Indian. The distinguishing features of the *Nagar* are its cruciform ground-plan and a curvilinear *shikhar*. The *Dravid* temple on the other hand has a rectangular ground-plan and a pyramidal roof.

In Orissa, the names are all different and one may distinguish four types of temples namely, the *Rekha*, the *Bhadra*, the *Khakhara* and *Gaurya*. Of these the two forms most prevalent are the *Rekha* and the *Bhadra*. The *Khakhara (Dravidian)* is of some importance because miniatures of this style are widely employed as a decorative motif on the body of *Rekha* or *Bhadra* temples. The ground plan of the *Rekha* and *Bhadra* is square and that of the *Khakhara* rectangular.

The Hindu temple is usually regarded as the body of God so that it has the usual parts which a body has, namely, the feet, the legs, the trunk, the neck, the forehead etc. The Orissan nomenclature has *pisht*, *bada*, *gandi* and *mastik* corresponding to the parts of the body. The *pisht* is the platform on which the temple stands, the *bada* is the walls upto the level where the curvilinear tower begins, the *gandi* is the neck and the *mastak* is the fore-head. These are the main terms although it must be admitted that in the Oisssan canons, there is a distinct term for each and every part, even the smallest part of the structure, so that there can be absolutely no question of any error by a properly trained workman, who will be familiar with all these terms.

Horizontally and vertically the structure is divided into what are called *raths* and *pags*. These are the mouldings and the divisions which help to demarcate the various storeys and parts of the temple structure. In the earlier phase, a temple was only *tri-rath* so that there were only three divisions. As the structures became more and more elaborate, temples were constructed which were *panch-rath sept-rath* or *nav-rath*. Indeed, the larger the number of *raths*, the superior the temple. One of the verses in the Shilp Shastr puts it thus:

"Salutations to Sri Ganesha. Let there be no hindrance (to this undertaking). Thus (begins) in the *Bhabanapradipa*, which was recited by the sage Viswakarma in the forest of Naimisha, (a description of) the characteristics of place (meaning temples in the present case).....Now (we are) to know how many *rathakas* characterise the (different) classes of temples. The Brahmin (is characterised) by nine, the Kshatriya by seven, the Vaishya by five and the Sudra by three *rathakas*. If one builds a *navaratha* temple, which is Brahmin (by caste), then the manes of the person will dwell in the region of Brahman, the Supreme Being. If one builds *saptaratha* temple, one's manes will verily live in the Surya and Chandra-lokas. If Vaishya builds a *pancharatha* (temple), then one's manes will dwell in the region of the Rudras. (If one builds) a Sudra or *triratha* temple, then one's manes will dwell in the region of the Moon."[2]

It is necessary to understand these terms because they are frequently used. Some other terms of importance in this context are the *Jangh* which corresponds to the thigh, the *uru* which is the chest, the *amalak* or *amla*, literally the *amla* fruit,

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which denotes the bell-shaped, circular crowning part of the temple and the *kalash*, the auspicious water-pot, which is placed above the *amla*. Above the *kalash* is the finial where the flag, the *dhwaja*, flies or where the weapon or some other symbol of the god, to whom the temple is dedicated is, placed.

As we have seen, the Orissan temple may be divided so far as its body is concerned, into four main portions along the verticle axis; the *pisht* or the pedestal; the *bada* or the wall, *gandi* or the trunk, the body; the *mastak* or the crown. The pedestal may or may not form a part of the temple and a temple as important as that of the Lingraj is without one, while the nearby Anant Vasudev has one. The *bada*, which goes up to a certain height, is the same for all temples and it is only with the *gandi*, the body of the temple, that distinguishing features of the various types may be differentiated between.

This difference is mainly in respect of the way the *gandi* is constructed. In the case of the *Rekha* temple, it rises straight up to a certain height and then begins to curve inwards rather rapidly. The *mastak* of the temple is composed of several elements. Just above the *gandi* is the *beki* or the throat. Then comes the *amla*; above the *amla* is the *khapuri* or skull and on this is placed the *kalash*, water-pot, or *ayudha*, the weapon of the deity to whom the temple is dedicated.

In the case of the *Bhadra* temple, the *gandi* is composed of a number of *pidhas* or horizontal platforms piled up in the form of a pyramid. These *pidhas* may be arranged in tiers called *potala*. In the case of the *Bhadra* temple also, the *mastak* is composed of several elements with this difference that there are, so to put it, two *bikis*. First comes the *biki* below the *ghanta*, a structure shaped like a bell, then another *biki* and than *amla* and then *khapuri* and *kalash* and *ayudha* as in the case of the *Rekha*.

Another way of distinguishing between temples is to think of them in terms of *tri-anga* or *panch-anga*. This depends upon how the *bada* is divided. In the case of the *tri-ang* the *bada* is divided into three portions namely, *pabhag*, *jangh*, and *barand* corresponding to the foot, the thigh and the waist. All the earlier temples of Bhubneshwar, for instance, are *tri-ang*. Later on the *bada* was divided into five segments namely *pabhag*, *tal-jangh* or lower thigh, the *upar-jangh* or the upper thigh, the *bandhana* and the *barand*. In this context it may be mentioned that in the case of the *tri-ang*, their *badas* have a ratio of one to three, between the length of the sanctum and the *Jagmohan* and the total height of the temple. But this ratio increases from one to four or one to five or more in the case of the *Rekha* temples having five elements in their *bada*. It even increase to one to seven as in the case of the temple of Konark. Incidentally, one of the surer ways of dating a temple is to see whether the temple is a *tri-ang* or *panch-ang* in respect of its *bada* and what the ratio of its elevation is.

We can have a bird's-eye view of the development of the temple art of Orissa by considering about six or seven well-known temples. These mark the various stages of progress the temple art made in this region. However, before we do

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that we should mention that it is customary to divide the temple art of Orissa into three phases. The earliest begins from 7th to 8th century and lasts for about two hundred years. It begins, as the earliest phase for the Hindu Temple as a whole does, with a single-chambered sanctuary consisting of the *deul*, but a *Jagamohan* is added not before long. The middle phase spans another two hundred years, roughly from 950 to 1150 and is marked by increase in size of the temple, lavish sculpture, better finish and greater grace. The last phase extends from 1150 to 1300 A.D. Temples of importance in the earlier phase are those of Parshurameshwar and Mukteshwar, both at Bhubaneswar. In the middle phase, we have the two great temples of Lingaraj and the Jagannath at Puri. In the final phase, the best of the lot are Raja Rani temple of Bhubneshwar and the Sun-temple at Konark. In this phase, all earlier gains are consolidated and new heights achieved.

The Parshurameshwar, built during the 7th or 8th century, is the oldest of the extant temples in Bhubneswar and exemplifies the earliest form of the Orissan temple. Although the Orissan temples are generally astyler, this temple has a pillared hall. It has the two essential portions of an Orissan temple, namely, the *Deul* and the *Jagmohan* but the latter, distinctly separated from the sanctum is a later addition. The temple is rather small and measures hardly 50 feet long while the tower over the sanctum, which curves directly from the ground, is less than 45 feet high.

In respect of construction, the method used is that of placing the stones one on the other without applying cement or mortar, the stones being "kept in position by their weight and balance." And simple as this principle of construction is, "the method employed in this small shrine remained in vogue in Orissa and was followed in the subsequent period even in raising up such enormous piles of structures as the great Lingraj Temple at Bhubneshwar and the far-famed Sun Temple at Konarak."[3]

The next phase begins with that beautiful, nay, exquisite temple, the Mukteshwar. Some critics like to make this temple the culmination of this first phase chiefly because of its small size. It measures about 45 feet long and the tower is hardly 35 feet high. Nevertheless, the whole building is so exquisitely proportioned and its parts are so finely put together that we find it is to be a most impressive building. A noteworthy feature is that, unlike the earlier temples of Orissa which are all *tri-rath*, this temple is *panch-rath* in plan. In addition, there is a great deal of progress visible in respect of sculptural ornaments in this temple. Fergusson says that in its class it may be considered the gem of Orissan architecture. We see also that sculpture is becoming a definite and pronounced part of the architecture.

In the second phase, the temples begin to grow in size and the *shikhars* begin to attain a soaring height. The most representative examples of this phase are the two temples of the Lingaraj at Bhubaneswar and the Jagannath at Puri which

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can be dated to 1000 and 1100 A.D. respectively. As with the temples of the South, there is, in both cases, now an outer court. The enclosure in which the Lingraj stands measures 520 feet × 465 feet. The temple consists of four components of the fully developed temple, all disposed along the same axle. But all the four buildings do not date from the same period, the *Natya Mandir* and the *Bhog Mandir* having been added much later.

We have mentioned above that there had been an increasingly larger splash of the sculptural decoration in the Orissan temples. Now, in the Lingraj, the sculptural art of Orissa reaches a very high mark of excellence. What is true of sculpture is, of course, true equally of the architectural planning and execution. In fact, considering that the Sun-temple of Konark was perhaps never completed and that, in any case, it is a ruin, one could say that in the Lingraj the Orissan temple art found its zenith and acme, its perfection and fulfilment. The Lingraj is perhaps the finest Hindu temple extant today and the heart literally leaps up at the sight of this perfect piece of art.

The finest feature of the Lingaraj is its extremely impressive 150-feet high tower—an achievement in the art and technique of breaking a "stupendous mass into vertical *pags*, to add to the fluency of the line"

The Jagannath Temple at Puri is larger and later than the Lingaraj. And like the Lingraj it consists of four components—not all of the same date. Built on the same principles and to the same pattern as the Bhubaneswar sanctuary, it somehow fails to achieve the effect of grace and grandeur which characterises the Lingraj. In the opinion of some critics this may be due to factors like frequent renovations, and its annual coat of lime-wash, but essentially this should be attributed to the lack of that intangible factor which makes for beauty; that something to which Byron alludes in those well-known lines of his poem, *She walks in Beauty :*

> "One shade the more, one ray the less,
> Had half impair'd the nameless grace." [4]

The temple's main entrance was on the east where now stands the fine *Arun Stambh*, once of Konark. It has been removed from its original site between the *Jagmohan* and the *Natya Mandir* of the Sun Temple.

N.K. Bose sums up the modification which the Orissan temple underwent both in respect of the tower and the *Jagmohan* during this later phase: "With increase in horizontal and vertical dimensions the *rekha*, its tower, as well as the construction of the interior, all showed marked alterations. The vertical wall which was formerly divided into three *rathas* now came to be divided into five, seven and even nine *rathas*. The vertical divisions of the wall formerly consisted of an initial set of broad mouldings collectively known as *pabhaga*, followed by a *jangha* with niches housing the figures of attendant divinities, this being followed by a narrow *baranda*. Over this rose the curvilinear tower. But as the proportionate height rose from the neighbourhood of four to five and beyond,

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the vertical wall came to be divided into five parts instead of three, and the character of the mouldings also changed in keeping with the growing upward urge of the temple itself. The vertical line gradually gained in importance at the expense of the horizontal emphasis which was the prevailing note of the earlier period." [5]

The Raja Rani temple furnishes an example of the typical Orissan form. It marks a definite advance especially in respect of composition. The *ang-shikhars* "clinging and clustering around the main *shikhar*" give a beautiful elevational effect. This temple shows that the Orissan artist did develop the so-called "Khajuraho" style of the *Shikhar*, but chose not to pursue this line of treatment. Critics praise this sense of restraint: "The temple of Rajarani at Bhuvanesvara exhibits a cluster of smaller towers around the body of the main *gandi*. This may appear to be an exotic growth in Orissa, being rather very rare in that area. This novel arrangement may be explained as the natural outcome of a logical evolution following a process of elaboration, refinement and decoration as outlined above. The effect, however, did not prove to be happy, as the different miniatures round the body of the main tower broke up and dissolved the forceful outline of the temple, an outline that was more pleasing and architecturally more sound. It might be, that for this reason the process was not followed up in Orissa; but it had its full play in Central India, where the aspiring outline of the *rekha* tower was almost effaced by an exuberance of turrets clinging to the body of the main *sikhara*, and thus breaking up its contour. The Orissan architects knew where to stop, and as soon as it became apparent that the process of evolution, when carried to a logical culmination, would lead to a loss of architectural effect, they gave up the attempt and confined the miniature *rekhas* to the *anuraha-pagas* only, and casually to the *raha-paga* of the front facade. They, however, took care that these miniature replicas were not obtrusive enough to break up the linear ascent of the main tower." [6]

Thus we see that by the time the artists of Orissa came to perform the miracle which is Konark, their precursors had evolved from the rude early temples of Orissa a grand and graceful sanctuary, fit in all respects to serve as the house of the god to whom it was raised. S.K. Saraswati has summed up the main tendencies of this evolution thus: "The tendency in evolution is towards on elaboration and refinement of the simpler design of the earlier temple and also towards an accentuation of height. The elaboration is noticed not only in the greater variegation of the ground plan, obtained by adding to the number of projections, but also in that of elevation where the exterior facade is divided into a larger number of sections along the vertical axis. The greater variegation in the elevation of the temple is no doubt necessitated by an urge for increased height." [7] And again, "a refinement and delicacy of the outline may be noticed in the gradual rounding off of the edges at the corners as well as in the *ratha-paga*

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projections. But in such attempts at softening off, the architects took especial care not to break up the outline, and the unbroken contour of the tall tower, together with the accentuated verticalism of the *ratha-paga* projections, gave an impression of aspiring height and grandeur." [8]

And so we come to the Sun Temple. The monument can be better appreciated now, for we know and understand the background against which it came into being. Like the Kandariya Mahadev at Khajuraho or the great Lingraj temple at Bhubneswar, a monument like that of the Sun-temple at Konark does not come into existence all of a sudden, does not appear out of nothing, is not brought by fairies from some heaven and put upon a spot upon this earth miraculously. Such monuments come as culmination of centuries of experiment and endeavour by generation after generation of first-rate artists and craftsmen. They are the end and acme of a tradition, spanning a long period in which the aims and ideals as well as the practice and techniques have been well-nigh perfected. Much as one would like to think of the temple of Konark as a miracle, as something which is achieved in an instant, it has to be remembered that such an instant comes after almost an eternity of work of great quality. If genius is to be defined as one percent of inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration, then structures like those of the sanctuary at Konark bear out this truth abundantly. The stupendous achievement, which the Black Pagoda is, is a remarkable tribute to the entire system and set-up which resulted in work of sustained excellence for centuries—a system which harmonised into one whole diverse needs and deeds, of Religion, Society and Art.

How are great monuments, monuments which are the pride and glory of Man, monuments which are miracles like Konark, built? One answer is that in most cases kings dream and command them or a queen may desire them—in the case of the Taj Mahal, even demand them in the name of love, for memory's sake! So far as the Sun temple is concerned, there are sevaral explanations. The most acceptable is this. King Narsing Dev was a great monarch and had won great victories in the battle-field and to mark his victories and to give his thanks to the powers that be he decided to build a temple whose like none had seen. Cost was no consideration; indeed he fixed the revenue of 1200 villages to cover the cost and 12000 excellent workers worked for 12 long years. But why was this temple built at Konark? May be an old temple at Konark in his kingdom had fallen and so he built a new one on the same site, and he built it both to the old god, Surya, as well as the new god, Vishnu, and that is how the temple came to be dedicated to Vishnu Surya. But there may be other reasons. Percy Brown has offered an explanation: "In Orissa at this period the *maithuna* movement appears to have obtained a firm hold on a considerable section of the community, while it is worthy of remark that the carvings reproduce an ethnological type, very distinctive in appearance, which is now never seen. It is not improbable that this temple was erected on such a remote site in order that the

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practices so wantonly illustrated might be ceremoniously conducted by its addicts in an under-world of their own!"[9]

This may or may not be true but another good reason is worth considering. The site of a building is an important matter. It is the first consideration, and one cannot be too careful in choosing a suitable location.

What better site could there be than Konark, where the elements, the Sea and the Sky and the Earth meet with such majestic effect, where, when it rises, the Sun lets its first golden rays light up the land and the waters, and where, before it sinks into the western horizon, it salutes the landscape with its last red rays!

And the site having been selected, what does the master-architect do next, if he would fulfil a king's command ? It is obvious that what matters next is the design. In this case, it matters a great deal, for nothing could be more befitting for a temple for the Sun than this allegorical representation of the Sun-god riding on his chariot across the sky.

There are many fine temples in India, some really beautiful ones, but the only way one may find out whether a particular temple is the temple of this god or that is by referring to the statues within. Or, we may look at the flag or weapon atop or the vehicle of the god, or some such other symbol. But the building as such does not indicate the identity of the deity to whom it is dedicated. Change the flag or the weapon, change the vehicle of the god and change the statue of the deity within and the same temple will serve for another god ! Not so in the case of the Konark sanctuary. This is the Sun-god's chariot, and his temple without question.

Of course, the fact that the design is that of a chariot need not amount to much, for other gods have their chariots too. There is the car of Jagannath on which the god and his brother and his sister ride annually at Puri. And at Mahabalipuram, there are exquisite little chariots of the Pandavs—the germ of this idea at Konark. And the scriptures have such luscious descriptions of the chariots. That it why the designers went a step further and saw to it that it was not any chariot, but one which was distinctly that of Surya. They used thought and discernment. For instance, in respect of the wheels, they did not make the chariot single-wheeled, or two-wheeled, seven-wheeled or a hundred wheeled. They put the number of wheels at twelve, on either side, symbolising the year's dark fortnights and the bright ones. And in each wheel, they put eight thick and eight thin wheel spokes which mark the divisions of the day and night according to Hindu reckoning. Keeping to still other details of this allegorical concept, they yoked to it seven horses, one for each day of the week, and so on. No, there was no mistaking whose chariot was here racing across the skies.

The site was well chosen; the design was a stroke of genius. For the rest, everything else had been made ready during centuries of earlier work. The Hindu temple had been fully evolved into a four-component complex; methods and materials had been tried out. The resources of a great king were available

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and so the artists set to work. Nevertheless, these artists refused to stop thinking, nor did they take it for granted that the best lay in the past. On the other hand, they firmly believed that the best was yet to be and they were determined to fashion that. That is why they re-examined every aspect, architectural or sculptural, of the work they had undertaken and dared to think for themselves. For example, they thought that disposing all the four-components along the same axial line elongated the horizontal out of proportion and marred the over-all effect. Consequently, they placed the *Bhog Mandap* altogether off the common axle, to the South, and although they put the *Deul*, and the *Jagmohan*, as one unit, they separated the *Natya Mandir* by leaving a space of about 30 feet between the *Jagmohan* and the *Natya Mandir*; and on this they erected a tall and fine and graceful pillar, the *Arun Stambh*, which now adorns the eastern gateway of the Jagannath at Puri. All this was well thought and the builders deserve S.K. Saraswati's words of praise: "The position of the *nata-mandapa* as an isolated structure in front of the temple proper may be regarded as an improvement on the design which joins the four essential components in an axial line with the sanctum. The latter prolongs the length of the plan inordinately in comparison with its breadth and thus upsets the balance. At Konarak, not only is the *nata-mandapa* planned as a detached building in front of the main temple group, but the *bhoga-mandapa* also appears as a separate building on one side. Their character and location not only proclaim a correct sense of grouping and architectural application, but also a reasoned co-ordination of all into a pleasing unified scheme with all the necessary components without in any way disturbing the balance and harmony of the composition." [10]

This exercise, fullest exercise, of a most enlightened aesthetic judgement and an uncanny perception regarding architectural designing and effect, is in evidence throughout. The builders of the Sun temple draw on previous experience and achievement in their field, but they improve and advance on almost every count. Compare, for example, the roof of the *Jagmohan*. One should have thought that perfection had been arrived at already in the Lingraj; but the Konark craftsmen showed that there was scope for betterment there also. Consequently they modified the mouldings and produced a far more pleasing and elegant effect. Fergusson waxes eloquent on this point: "Architecturally the great beauty of this temple arises from the form of the design of the roof of the *Jagmohan* or porch, the only part now remaining. Both in dimensions and detail, it is extremely like that of the great temple at Bhuvaneswar, but it is here divided into three storeys instead of two, which is an immense improvement, and it rises at a more agreeable angle. The first and second storeys consist of six cornices each, the third of five only. . . The lower ones are carved with infinite beauty and variety on all their twelve faces, and the antefixae at the angles and breaks are used with an elegance and judgment a true Yavana could hardly have surpassed. There is, so far as I know, no roof in India where the same play of

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light and shade is obtained with an equal amount of richness and constructive propriety as in this instance, nor one that sits as gracefully on the base that supports it." [11]

The *Jagmohan* is the only portion of the huge temple which survives as a whole unit. Of the two others which stood to the east and the west, namely the *Deul* and the *Natya Mandir*, there are only remnants, precious little of the *Deul*, but a far larger portion of the latter. Of the sanctum to which the Jagmohan was an adjunct, today "only a fragment one angle, remains, rising to the height of about 140 to 150 feet." If we were to attempt an imaginary reconstruction of the temple to proportions judged from the *Jagmohan* and other parts like this fragment of the tower, we should think that the *shikhar* rose to a considerable height, perhaps over two hundred feet. And it must have been ornamented really lavishly.

The temple was placed in the centre of a quadrangular enclosure. The entrance was from the east where the roofless *Natya Mandir* we have mentioned above stands. This building stood on a lavishly carved platform. On each side of this platform, there are long flights of steps. The eastern flight is flanked by two lions each rampant on an elephant. In keeping with the accepted design of such buildings, the *Natya Mandir* must have had a pyramidal roof similar to the one we see over the *Jagmohan*. Whatever remains of the *Natya Mandir* indicates a fine sense of proportion and the carvings are perfectly suited to the purpose this structure was supposed to serve.

Proceeding further towards the West, one step on to the space on which once stood the *Arun Sthamb* and beyond, we see the *Jagmohan*—the *Bhadra* structure which was joined to the lofty *Rekha* sanctum, both of which stood on enormous wheels so as to represent the chariot of the Sun. As we have noted earlier, the *Deul* and the *Jagmohan* constitute, throughout the story of Orissan temple, the essential part of the structure. And it is most befitting that in this design these two together should be made to fit into a single unit. As it is, both these were raised on a high *pisht*, basement, which is profusely and marvellously sculpted. Indeed, there are layers upon layers, several bands and friezes, of sculpture, and all these offering both beauty and variety, which serve as the ornament. The wheels are themselves a marvellous combination of massiveness and grace. Over this base consisting of the sculpted friezes and the wheels rose the *badas* of the *Deul* and the *Jagmohan*. Each of these was *panch-rath* in plan. The *raths* and the *pags* are all divided and diversified into smaller divisions and facets. Speaking of these, S.K. Saraswati says: "These divisions and sub-divisions, richly embellished with elaborate carvings, are carried up along the height of the tower. Not only do they lighten the enormous mass by introducing pleasing varieties of lights and shades, but they also accentuate the soaring verticalism of the monument and impart to it a fluency and movement seldom parallelled in any other kind of building." [12]

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The *Jagmohan* is carved with such profusion and elegance that, to quote Hunter, "If all this ungrudging labour was lavished on merely the outer chamber, we may judge of the magnificence of the towered sanctuary . . . The ruins now lie heaped upon the floor, a gigantic chaos; and the contrast between their unwidely bulk, and the laborious sculpture which covers almost every square inch outside, forces on the memory Bishop Heber's criticism that the Indians built like Titans and finished like jewellers."[13]

The *Jagmohan* is, we have seen, the only component still standing whole and intact. In plan it is a square measuring sixty feet on a side, although, and as is usual with the *Nagar* temples, the projections on the sides, in the form of the doorways, give it the shape of a cross. The walls, divided most attractively in the usual manner of the fully developed Orissan temple, have the same height, of sixty feet, as the width of the temple on the outside, so that this lower portion, below the roof, forms a perfect cube. Carved tastfully, profusely at the bottom, and upto the height of the wheels, and a little less exuberantly in the upper part, the walls, which are at places twenty feet thick, sport a most impressive roof. This rises in three tiers of steps "each consisting of a number of receding layers of masonry," giving the effect of "inverted stairs," and forming as it were "three lofty flights of steps," all decorated with skillfully sculpted birds, animals and human figures—"elephants, horses, cavalry and foot soldiers in endless processions." Of these three storeys of the roof, the two lower ones are composed of six cornices each while the upper most has only five of these string courses. On each terrace between the tiers there are magnificent free-standing statues. Those on the two lower terraces are *apsaras* and *gandharvas*, celestial dancers and singers and musicians, singing, dancing or performing on various instruments in praise and honour of the Sun-god. Life-sized, nay a little larger than that, and tremendously effective in their stances, these figures are a unique feature of this temple and constitute perhaps the only instance of such free-standing figures—not mythical animals—in Indian archiecture. On the uppermost terrace, there are mythical animals, 'more nearly resembling lions more than anything else'. They support on their shoulders the outer rim of the huge base of the crown towards which the roof steadily converges. Over the doorways, the artists carved statues of 'Brahma' so as to "shed the sanction of religion on the aerial sculptured world." The over-all height of the building is more than a hundred feet.

There are three doorways, one in the middle of each of its free sides. The main entrance was from the east. The portal on that side is reached by a wide stairway. On either side of this stairway, there are the horses that draw the chariot, three on one side and four on the other.

The interior of the *Jagmohan* has been sealed up so as to preserve the buiding from further damage. Since the walls are as thick as twenty feet, the inner measurements are forty feet square and the height is also the same. Above that height the chamber converges for another twenty feet towards the point where

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the roof proper of the structure began and where a false ceiling was provided. Fergusson, who saw the interior, described it as follows—Incidentally his description provides a fairly valid guess as to the use the builders of Konark made of the iron-beams found on the site:

"Internally, the chamber is singularly plain, but presents some constructive peculiarities worthy of attention. On the floor, it is about 40 feet square, and the walls rise plain to about the same height. Here it begins to bracket inwards, till it contracts to about 20 feet, where it was ceiled with a flat stone roof, supported by wrought-iron beams . . . . . showing a knowledge of the properties and strength of the material that is remarkable in a people who are now so utterly incapable of forging such masses. The iron pillar at Delhi is even a more remarkable example than this, and no satisfactory explanation has yet been given as to the mode in which it was manufactured. Its object, however, is plain, while the employment of these beams here is a mystery. They were not wanted for strength, as the building is still firm after they have fallen, and so expensive a false ceiling was not wanted architecturally to roof so plain a chamber. It seems to be only another instance of that profusion of labour which the Hindus loved to lavish on the temples of their gods."[14]

The sanctum stood next to the *Jagmohan* forming an integral part of the two-unit design of the chariot, But for a portion adjoining the Jagmohan, the rest of this structure is no longer there. We can, therefore, only have a conjecture as to its construction and glory, based on the proportions and workmanship of the remains of the temple, the Jagmohan and the Nat Mandir.

It remains to be added that the entire temple was profusely and most lavishly ornamented with sculpture. We shall deal with this aspect at length in the next chapter. It may, however, be pointed out here that the Orissan temple had already arrived at a stage in which architecture and sculpture had been harmonised into one-whole and this to such an extent that architecture was sculpture and *vice-.versa*. Stella Kramrisch sums this up admirably by saying that "Architecture in Orissa is but sculpture on a gigantic scale."

This is true. It is almost impossible to distinguish between the two arts in this supreme example of the Orissan architecture-sculpture phase of temple art. Of course, for the purpose of our study, it was necessary to view the two arts as separate. In fact, however, these are inseparable, and like the rose and its colour, wholly indistinguishable. Where architecture ends and sculpture begins in this monument, is not easy to point out. Nevertheless, and now that we have finished with one aspect, namely architecture, let us move on to the other, sculpture, as if it had a distinct entity of its own.

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5 ALL THAT THE GOD SEETH

A MIRACLE OF ARCHITECTURE, the Sun Temple at Konark is equally well a miracle of sculpture. The temple belongs to that phase of the Indian art in which architecture is sculpture. The entire monument is carved all over so that literally there is not an inch of the surface which is not sculpted, In this sense, this monument is completely true to the definition of the Hindu temple offered by Stella Kramrisch that 'The Hindu temple is a monument whose outer surface consists of sculpture." From bottom to top, and from one end to another and across, infinitely beautiful and wonderfully variegated sculptures, vegetal, animal, human and divine, real and mythical, adorn the walls of the sanctury and help create a whole universe, a replica of the world which the Sun-god lights up, thus presenting for our view all that the Sun seeth. There is all the activity which man pursues in peace and there are scenes from the life and work of warriors. And whether it is the war of the sexes or the war of the soldiers which they depict, the skill of the artists is equally evident. From minute little lotus-petals to huge elephants, from creeper-scrolls on their rims to the enormous wheels themselves, all that is carved is carved to perfection. The monument, therefore, deserves all the superlatives which have been applied to it in respect of its sculpture.

This praise has been accorded on every count, for the over-all effect, for parts and portions, for single pieces, for the statues of the gods and the figures of women, for *mithuns*, for men, for the horses and the elephants and the lions, for the flower-scrolls as well as the geometric patterns, for the wheels as well as the way the effect of motion has been chiselled. The whole edifice contains so much of the beautiful, so many points of excellence that few critics are able to refer to all that is there. Each chooses this aspect or that according to his fancy, yet all agree that the Konark temple is the most lavishly decorated of India's monuments. Indeed, Fergusson goes farther than that and thinks that it is the world's 'most richly ornamented building.'

Earlier Stirling had commented on Konark thus: "The exterior of the side walls, as of the roof, is loaded with a profusion of the richest seulptured ornament . . . The whole of the sculptures of these figures, comprising men and

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animals, foliage, and arabesque pattern, is executed with a degree of taste, propriety and freedom which would stand a comparison with some of our best specimens of Gothic architectural ornaments. The workmanship remains, too, as perfect, as if it has just come from under the chisel of the sculptor, owing to the extreme hardness and durability of the stone."[1]

Percy Brown gives a general appraisal: "Few buildings can boast of such an unrestrained abundance of plastic decoration as this vast structure, every portion of the exterior being moulded and chiselled either in the form of abstract geometrical ornament, conventional foliage, mythical animals, fabulous beings half-human with half-serpent, coils, figures satanic and figures divine, of every conceivable motif and subject known to the Indian mind, and in a technique which ranges from patterns cut with the minute precision of a cameo to powerfully modelled groups of colossal size. As far as the mural decoration is concerned the system on which it was applied has as its basis a framework of vertical and horizontal courses, recalling in some respects the warp and weft of a woven textile, the relief ornament presenting an intricate tapestry of form, amazingly beautiful."[2]

Stella Kramrisch holds the sculptures of Konark in high esteem: "The colossal statues of the Sun Temple of Konark hold (in limbs that look as though they had been turned on a potter's wheel) their joyous attitude in space, high up on the roof of the temple. Because they transport their being into the volume of their emotions, the images of the Sun temple of Konarak belong to eternity in the world of art."[3]

Hunter counts out all the items but is fascinated obviously by the nymphs of whom he takes particular notice: "Sculpture in high relief, exquisitely cut, but of an indecent character, cover the exterior walls, and bear witness to an age when Hindu artists worked from nature. The nymphs are beautifully shaped women, in luscious attitudes . . . . . Innumerable busts of nymphs stand out from the mass of carving, while images of four-headed Brahma look at this sculptured world. The nymphs are rather over life-size, with swelling busts, full throats, and delicately retreating heads. They wear their hair in enormous chignons, projecting horizontally from behind. A head-dress falls in graceful festoons across both temples, ending in a golden boss at either ear, from which hang elaborate ear-rings. Their necklaces consist of many piles of the tulsi bead and fall in a triangular bracelet just below the shoulder, and a still more elaborate one at the elbow. Their ornaments—ornaments so abundant however as to form a sort of clothing—supply their only drapery above the waist, which is encircled by a girdle of many folds. From this, a garment of gauzy muslin falls upon the limbs, but scarcely conceals their delicate curves."[4]

Coomarswamy is all praise for the *mithuns*: "The whole building is covered with a profusion of remarkable and beautiful carvings symbolising the fertilising and creative power of the Sun. It is a hymn to life, a frank and exquisite glori-

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fication of creative forces in the universe."[5]

Mitra praises a monolithic pillar: "In front of the eastern gateway there is an artistic ornament of marked elegance and great beauty. It is a monolithic pillar of chlorite, set on an exquisite pedestal of the same material. Carvings on these are of the most sumptuous description, the like of which are not to be seen anywhere else in India. As a piece of art-work, they are fit to be compared with the best specimens of the kind—in any part of the country."[6]

Havell admires a war-horse led by a soldier: "Here Indian sculptors have shown that they can express with as much fire and passion as the greatest European art the pride of victory and the glory of triumphant warfare; for not even the Homeric grandeur of the Elgin marbles surpasses the magnificent movement and modelling of this Indian Achilles, and the superbly monumental horse in its massive strength and vigour is not unworthy of comparison with Verrochio's famous masterpiece at Venice."[7]

About this great animal, Roger Fry is equally enthusiastic: "All the Ellora and Elephanta sculptures . . . . . appeal to the European eye by a relatively greater observance of the laws of co-ordination, and by an evidence of dramatic force which indicates that Indian Art did not always convey its meaning in a strange tongue. The same is true, in an even greater degree, of the superb colossal figure of a war-horse led by a striding soldier from Konarak, Orissa. This has indeed, in the highest degree, the qualities of great moumental design."[8]

Coomaraswamy also waxes eloquent in praise of this study: "The four main entrances of the temple are guarded by pairs of rampant animals. Those on the south side are horses trampling down armed men. One of these great horses, with a warrior striding beside it, has a majestic and monumental grandeur which makes it rank amongst the finest heroic sculptures in the world."[9]

Mano Mohan Ganguly is impressed by the elephant: "The huge monolithic elephant at Konarak carved out of a single block is worth mentioning. It may have been said to have been copied from nature, and in consequence of this, it has extracted the unstinted admiration of the most captious critics of art."[10]

Now, this is not surprising. Coming at the end of a long tradition stretching over fifteen hundred years from the elephant of Dholi to the elephant of Konark, the sculptors of the Sun Temple had at their disposal all the knowledge and skill, experience and achievement not only of the Orissan school of sculpture but also of the various other schools around their region. The Konark sculptor made use of all that had gone before and in turn created what is known to be the climax and culimination of the Orissan sculpture, nay, the very acme and zenith of Indian sculpture. After this miraculous achievement, architecture as well as sculpture in this style, the *Nagar* temple, came to a halt. In the north, the fields that were tried later on in achievement for art were painting and poetry, and may be dance and music, but so far as architecture and sculpture are concerned. Konark marks literally the high water-mark of workmanship. There is hardly a

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temple of any note and worth constructed after this. In the sphere of sculpture, certainly, there is no temple which came anywhere near the height reached by the sculptors at Konark.

We have observed that the sculpted surfaces of the temple of Konark presented the entire world which the Sun lights up. As such, there are innumerable animal and human figures and a variety and profusion of ornamental flower-scrolls, which had by this time become the fashion in Orissan art, and trees and creepers carved in that natural-sensuous style which is the predominant note of the sculptures of Konark. In addition to these there are denizens of the various worlds, and representatives of different species upon earth in the world of Nature. The design of the temple and the intention of the architects demanded that the entire universe be symbolically presented to us; and this has been done most skilfully.

Further, the design, that of the chariot, provides two extremely important components, the wheels and the horses, and both these have been well conceived and worked out by the sculptors. Enormous in size and wrought with extreme delicacy of carving the wheel of Konark is a wonder and is admittedly the finest example of architectural sculpture that the world possesses. What is more, the artists seem to have achieved that mastery which can convey an amazing semblance of liveliness. The vehicle seems to be in motion and the wheels have been so constructed and disposed that they indicate movement. In the same way, the horses are shown to be straining at their leashes and they are so designed that they create the effect of actually pulling the chariot, and that swiftly, on the long journey across the sky which they must undertake and complete within the allotted amount of time. Indeed, this whole idea of the chariot of the sun moving across the sky drawn by horses worthy of being yoked to this chariot, has been extremely well executed and not a single detail missed which could enrich the surface with such carving as would most aptly fit the theme.

But, and as we said above, this is only one aspect of the design. By now an over-all concept of the temple had come to be accepted for the *Nagar* style and that meant ample scope for carving and sculpting from yet another angle. The temple is the mountain *Meru* and so it is sculpted, right up to the top, in accordance with clear-cut injunctions so as to make it into a semblance of the world mountain. According to another interpretation, the temple was conceived as the body of God and so furnished by the sculptors. Finally, the temple had by now developed into a four-component palace of the god consisting of the *Deul*, the *Jagmohan*, the *Natya Mandir* and the *Bhog Mandap*. All these had to be what their names suggest, had to be decorated and carved accordingly on the outer surface, for, in Orissa, the inner surfaces are—in sharp contrast to what obtains in the temples of Khajuraho which are richly carved both without and within—severely bare. The result is that apart from the opportunity provided by the chariot design the sculptors of Konark had this further opportunity for adding

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the decorative element in respect of these different components and so-called apartments of the palace of the god upon earth. This yielded such rich material as the musicians and the dancers in the *Natya Mandir*, the beautiful *apsaras* and *nayikas*, who grace and add light to the walls of the *Natya Mandir* and the *Jagmohan*, and those exceptionally fetching *mithuns* which have brought to the temple of Konark such great fame and such a bad name. These *mithuns* are there because the temple represents everything which the universe contains. It is, to put it into a hackneyed phrase, the microcosm of the macrocosm, and is in every detail the replica of the universe. Additionally, in the case of the temple of Konark, the representation aims at putting forth all which the Sun will see during its journey while it looks upon all the regions. Nothing can be concealed from the light of the Sun and to his *samdrashti*, impartial eye, all is just what it is, and nothing is good or bad in itself. Everything is part of life, is part of the universe, and as such everything is as it should be. Obviously, the *mithun*, which stands for a most important activity of life, is the very source of life, could not be omitted from what is intended to be the total picture.

And it must be remembered that in all this sculptural ornamentation, there is not an iota of evidence that any attempt has been made to impose it as mere decoration. There is no question of giving an impression of artificiality, of gilding the lily, of making the surface ornament rich for the sake of making it rich. On the contrary, one might say, in the words of Coomaraswamy, that "it would be hard to find anywhere in the world a more perfect example of the adaptation of sculpture to architect than is afforded by the temple of Sun at Konark.Though the effect is that of such lavish, such unrestrained surface decoration, the sense of proportion is never lost." [11]

As for the technical aspect of the sculptures of Konark, they represent the finest in the tradition of the Orissan art. They conform in every way to the canons and the injunction and the statues, whether little or large, whether on the walls or inside the sanctum, were all made in accordance with these injunctions. One can see how in their modelling, they are a natural development and evolution of the experiments which the artists have been making. Luckily for these artists, Indian sculpture had by now already passed through several phases and stages and arrived at that amalgam of the natural and the sensuous which characterises the best of the Orissan sculptures, and, for that matter, all sculpture of this age, in respect of the *Nagar* temple. But, at Konark, we have the finest. As S.K. Saraswati points out, in these mangnificent figures we see the culmination of the 'classical concept of the early phase along with its urge for spontaneous naturalism and sensuous import.' This is true especially of the female figure. This, as Khandelwal rightly asserts, "has reached the limit of sensuousness possible in sound aesthetics . . . The ancient tree nymphs of Sanchi have reached the final stage of their development, and the bolder plastic qualities of the earlier figures have been replaced by a subtle and suggestive beauty which can

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be on occasion overdone."[12] No longer is any attempt made to offer the conventional for its own sake. It it true that the conventional is still there. It it very much there in the shape of the faces of the divinity, in the measurement according to the *Navtal* measure, in the human or the divine figures, and every statue can be explained in respect of its location by reference to the canonical requirements. But within these conventions the artists have felt free and worked to produce not a dead uniformity but sculpture which is alive and vibrant, which is infused with a vigour, and vitality which are the despair of the modern man. Here is that combination of force and culture, of size and grace, of massiveness and beauty, of vigour and lavishness, of sturdiness and gentleness, of the elephant and the flower which ought to be our ideal both in the realm of the body and the realm of the mind. Even as the temple, as a whole, stood for this rare combination of these two ordinarily opposed virtues, so do the sculptures of Konark show us the same remarkable synthesis, of delicacy and power, of strength and softness, of the might of the giant used for lotus-light kisses!

The technical development is best explained by reference to the various sculptures that we find in the same temples of which we have spoken when discussing the architectural aspect. The motifs, whether of decoration or of representations of the deities, are usually the same during these several centuries. What has changed is the proportion, the greater profusion of the decorative element; and the difference is in respect of the presentation and moulding and the over-all effect which, in the case of the temple of Konark, is unsurpassed. Nevertheless, it is essentially the same sculpture, the same ornamental vocabulary, which we find in earlier temples, especially, in the Vaital Deul, the Mukteshwar, the Lingraj and the Raja Rani. But now the art is in its full flower. Where the artists of Konark gain is in the impression of vitality, the effect of beauty, they produce. If we compare with similar figures at Konark, the lions or the leogryphs of one temple and another, or we look at the floral scroll of one century and another, or compare the *parshva devta* of different temples or the *mithuns*, or the beautiful women who grace this sanctuary or that; if we compare all these various items which have been experimented with, repeated, and perfected through centuries of work represented by the temples of Parshurameshwar or Vaital Deul, Mukteshwar or Raja Rani, the Lingraj or the Jagannath, we find that the sculptures of Konark have a distinctiveness about them which stamps them apart from any other sculpture. Indeed, one can single out a Konark piece anywhere for there is nothing in the entire world of Indian sculpture which is in the likeness of the Konark work. Whether it is the statues of the deity, the Sun-god, or the sculpted horses and elephants, the *mithuns* or the women of Konark, they are all incomparable. In respect of some temples of Khajuraho, the sculpture of one temple may be inter-changed with the sculpture of another temple and little difference would be marked. The same is true perhaps of some sculpture at Bhubaneswar. But the temple of Konark is unique in this that its

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sculptures do not bear any similarity with the sculpture of any other temple. They cannot be interchanged. And when we say this we do not mean that their quality consists only in their being different, in their being uninterchangeable. No; their uniqueness rests not merely on their being different but also on being unsurpassed in excellence of their execution. It is not without reason that the Sun-temple of Konark is perhaps the most talked of temple of India. Only about two other monuments of Indian art is there as much mention as there is of Konark. These are the Jagannath Temple at Puri, and the Taj Mahal at Agra. And whatever else may be said of the one or the other, no one will pretend that, in respect of the sculptural value, either of these two can vie with this radiant, romantic ruin at Konark. The other two monuments we have spoken of are whole. The temple of Konark is just some remains and remnants, a ruin. Yet, even in its ruined state it presents a wealth of sculpture which few other monuments in the whole world can offer.

To revert to the lines of development. These may be studied at two levels; generally and with particular reference to Orissan art. We shall first take up the story of the development of sculpture as a whole, and then study a few examples of the Orissan temples which served as the precursors of the Sun Temple.

The temples of the Hindus can be divided into two main categories. First, there are the sanctuaries which have been sculpted out of the rock, the most celebrated example of which is the Kailash Temple at Ellora. Secondly, we have the structures which are architecture proper. When this latter type of temples started appearing, they were insignificant little buildings consisting of a single cell in which was installed the diety, and a kind of porch. The buildings had flat roofs and one of the earliest examples of this type may be seen at Sanchi. Later on, the temple began to grow both in size and as to the number of components and a significant development that took place was that its outer surface began to be ornamented with sculpture. In the final stage of this development the monuments had surfaces which were compeltely covered by sculpture. In respect of this development of sculpture as ornament, such a clear-cut line is followed that one can, almost certainly, date a temple from the sculptural evidence.

In the case of the temples that we are considering—the architectural variety, that is—the ornamental sculpture develops slowly and along the following lines. First of all small niches are put in the middle of the wall to provide a kind of break in the monotony and to convert a single surface into a three portioned one. At the Das Avtar temple of Devgarh, we see a panel in which sculptures of Vishnu and others have been put. Later on more and more of such panels were provided, both to create an effect of divisions and sub-divisions as also to provide ornament to the outer surface of the temple. As a consequence of this development in the later stages the entire surface was covered.

The second important element is that, in the beginning, the sculpture was conceived and carried out more in terms of the horizontal, but, in the later stages,

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the vertical was emphasised. In the fully developed temples such as the Lingraj and the Konark temple or the Kandariya Mahadev temple at Khajuraho, etc. the vertical is emphasised so much that it adds distinctly to the illusion of height.

A third essential of the sculptural development was in respect of the figures. Like the shape of the temple, the earlier sculpture is also more or less squat and it is flat and two dimensioned. Later on an attempt is made to make it more and more free, to liberate it from the wall, so to put it, and, at times, to put it on a separate platform and even under a separate little roof of its own. The finest examples of such free standing sculptures on the body of the temple, are, of course, found in the Sun-temple of Konark but this has come about after several centuries of development. Along with this, the figure itself is treated in a different way. It is elongated, in some cases almost out of proportion; but generally and, as in the sculptures of the Sun temple, it is kept within proportion and beautifully executed. Also by now the figure has begun to give a three-dimensional effect; it is well-rounded and fully formed. Indeed it swells and fills out with breath, with vitality, with desire, with sensuousness.

Yet another distinctive feature which marks the early phase of sculpture is that there is little unity in the design of the plastic ornaments. In the earlier examples, there is beautiful sculpture but there is hardly any link between them; there is no concept of an over-all design. As time passes, the builders begin to conceive the temple as a better and more effective design architectonically; but also in respect of sculpture there is a complete scheme into which sculptures all over the temple are fitted. In the case of a great monument like the Lingraj and in that miracle of designing, namely the Sun Temple, we see this approach at its finest.

Yet another important essential in the development of the sculpture is in respect of the female figure. In the earlier temples, there is still a kind of ban and taboo on the presentation of the female as female. She appears as a devotee here and there or as a goddess and we do have now and then certain *vrikshikas* or *naginis*, denizens, that is, of worlds other than that of the human beings. But in course of time and, as the philosophic concepts began to undergo that change which brought woman into the forefront and converted her into the Goddess, as philosophies concerning the female flowered out and the Shakt and Tantric cults began to dominate the thoughts and beliefs of the people, there was a most striking change in the sculptural representation. The walls of the temples now began to display the woman beautiful in all her attraction, as forms of Mohini, or of the Tripur-sundari. In a temple like the Raja Rani, we see a galaxy of lovely feminine figures ravishingly beautiful and a delight in the realm of art. Likewise in the Lingraj and at Konark; so much so that Havell remarks that the artists of Orissa were frankly lovers of women. As *nayikyas* and *apsaras*, as beauties terrestrial as well as celestial, we find a bevy of lovely females in this one single monument of Konark which vies with other collections of such rare

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vintage as those of Ajanta, Khajuraho or Bhubaneswar.

And speaking of one single monument holding forth against whole groups, we have yet another aspect of the sculptural development in which Konark is a match and more than a match for any other rival. We refer to the erotic element, for sculpture began to move towards greater and more and more frank representation of the sexual act. The *mithun* figures began to appear rather reluctantly on the earlier temples, almost tentatively in the early phase and only in the rudimentary meaning of the word *mithun*, as couple, just two persons, man and woman together, but not necessarily as yet in embrace, not in the act of copulation, much less in the so-called obscene postures. But within a century or two of temple building, there is an abundance of such sculptural representation and in certain places, and on certain temples, there is such a glut of the *mithun* that such temples and places have earned for themselves a kind of infamy which it is difficult for them to live down. In the case of Orissa, the erotic begins to appear much later in the second phase so that we see a fair amount of it on the Lingraj and Raja Rani temples. But what we see in Bhubaneswar is not a patch on what we find at Konark. Here there is a complete symphony of the sex act, the complete Kama-Shastra, Science of Sex, sculpted in stone.

It is along these lines and in respect of these essentials that the sculptural development has taken place. In addition to the themic elaborateness as well as the introduction of new and different themes, there has been a change in the treatment of the form. The modelling and general technique of sculpture has been improving considerably so much so that in the final stages the whole work is simply superb and sculpture after sculpture of sheer loveliness, of miraculous beauty, may be found in this whole region.

Coming to the Orissan temples, the position for sculpture is the same as for architecture. We should divide the Orissan temple art in three phases. The Parshurameshwar and the Vaital Deul belong to the first phase. The Mukteshwar is sometime included in the first phase as the last temple, but most critics are now inclined to consider it as the first monument of the second phase which also covers the Lingaraj, the Anant Vasudev and the Jagannath's temple at Puri. The Raja Rani, and the Sun Temple of Konark should be counted as the final expression of the Orissan art. The Parshurameshwar temple covers a variety of themes: birds, animals, flowers, creepers, fruits and the human face. But there are few human figures and those are far from being attractive. This applies to the sculpture on the walls of the cella, for the *Jagmohan* of this temple is a later addition, and that carries 'groups of male musicians and dancers in a gay and excited mood' which 'make some of the most vigorous pieces of relief sculpture in the whole Orissan art.' The sculpture of the Vaital Deul is not very dissimilar but there is a new touch of the native genius about it and a clear indication of an effort being made to evolve a native style. Summing up the achievement during this early phase, Deva Prasad Ghose writes; "The decorative vocabulary of these

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early temples is extremely rich and varied in the wealth of geometrical and floral ornament, but as yet the undeveloped genius of the artist failed to harmonize the innumerable elements into tune with the architecture as a whole. The older structures reveal that, as regards motifs and arrangement, they were still under the influence of early Indian convention and inspired by Sunga and Gupta traditions. But the beautiful and charming floral designs of the Vaital Deul, boldly conceived and effectively executed, betray the gradual awakening of aesthetic consciousness and a true appreciation of the beauty of form."[12]

The Mukteshwar marks a distinct stage in the evolution of the local Orissan art and shows a great harmony between architecture and sculpture. Figures of well poised females and of ascetics are introduced, and *nags*, *nagnis*, monkeys, females and ascetics are presented in scenes which are descriptive as well as decorative; but they are as yet not made to fit into a single pattern, into a total unity of the theme. This occurs in the Lingraj. The Lingraj shows that great strides had been taken already in this field by the Orissan artist. Ghose comments on this: "By this time the statuary art had advanced by strides, and the statuettes on the Lingraj, life-like and in enchantingly graceful poses, are particularly attractive. So are also its floral designs, intricate traceries and scrollwork, specially those with animal insets. The scenes from the two Hindu epics carved on the *pidas* of its *jagamohana* are remarkable for their detail.". [Consequently], "After the Lingaraj there was little addition to the ornamental vocabulary."[13]

The Raja Rani temple helped advance the art in two ways. It added still more grace and elegance and sensuousness especially to the female figure, and, by working out to its logical end the idea of repitition of the miniature *shikhars* on the body of the temple, showed that the Orissan artist could have made their temples in the Khajuraho style, if they had wanted to. In addition, the Raja Rani perfected the scroll-work. On this point, Ghose is all admiration : "The monuments of the middle and late medieval period are characterized by the predominence of the beautiful and peculiar Orissan scrolls over all other forms of decoration. The wonderful skill and decorative feeling displayed in the execution of the various foliage designs, such as the *phula-lata*, *patra-lata*, *rati-lata* and *vana-lata* shows that in this department of fine arts, the Orissan sculptor easily excelled his Greek compeer. The appealing beauty and decorative grandeur of the Rajarani are pre-eminently due to the luxuriant grace of these scrolls. The minutely carved walls of the Rajarani with their delicate and intricate details, afforded a pleasing background to the exquisite statuary in high relief, and clearly outlined the flowing curves of the summarily modelled nymphs in alluring poses."[14]

Mukteshwar, Lingraj, Raja Rani—these were enough for the sculptors to have practised the art in preparation for the greatest effort in Orissan sculpture, namely the Sun Temple.

Although the sculptures of Konark are all uniformally excellent so that each

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category, whether the floral representation or the animal studies, the human figures or the *nags* and *naginis*, the *Apsaras* and the gods or goddesses, is worthy of equal notice and praise, six of these categories deserve special mention and attention. First, there is the excellent portrayal of animal figures. Many a critic of Indian sculpture, specially the Western critic, has usually spoken of the Indian's inability to represent the animals as well as the so-called studies in the Western sculpture do. In other matters also, some critics display their ignorance of the fundamentals of Indian sculpture by maintaining that the Indian artist does not know how to produce 'natural' studies. The fact is thar the Indian artist is not usually out to portray Nature. For him, sculpture is essentially the *moorti*, image of the god or goddess, or the form which a particular god or goddess chooses to assume. Also the Indian is, by and large, not concerned with the natural as such, but with the metaphysical concept which he is enjoined upon to portray. But all this apart, here there is as much evidence and proof as one wants of the skill and ability of the Indian sculpture to produce the natural. The elephants and the horses which we see at Konark show an amazing liveliness and few studies can surpass these. Even the great Western studies of the animals do not score over these.

Another most impressive series of sculptures is that of the *apsaras* and the *gandharvas*, who grace the two lower storeys of the roof of the *Jagmohan*. Built to heroic size these free-standings sculpture are unique studies. According to O.C. Ganguli, "we find them standing out in bold relief against the continuous recess of the tier singing and dancing and playing on various instruments such as the cymbal, the drum, and the flute apparently in praise of the maker of the day—" because of the following verse from Mayur's *Suryashatak* with which he thinks the Orissan craftsmen must have been familiar : "The rising splendour of (Surya), Maker of Day, is praised by Gandharvas (celestial choristers) with pleasing words of mingled prose and verse, (to the accompaniment of) musical instruments of the atodya (type)—i.e. the lute, the cymbal, the drum and the flute... And is also praised with discrimination by the ancient seers, further more, the universe, upon coming in contact with this (splendour) at once obtains again the loveliness of youth."

Yet another noteworthy category is that of sculptures carved out of green chlorite. Pillars or pedestals, human figures or divine—whatever has been carved out of this material is wonderful. Stirling's praise of some of these sculptures has been quoted already but will bear repitition: "The skill and labour of the best artists seems to have been reserved for the finely polished slabs of chlorite, which line and decorate the outer faces of the door ways. The whole of the sculpture of these figures, comprising men and animals, foliage, and arabesque patterns, is executed with a degree of taste, propriety and freedom which would stand a comparison with some of our best specimens of Gothic architectural ornaments. The workmanship remains, too, as perfect, as if it has

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just come from under the chisel of the sculptor, owing to the extreme hardness and durability of the stones."[15]

The fourth category which deserves mention is the wheels of Konark. These constitute a unique feature of the Sun Temple. Since the artists of Konark do not leave any part shorn of the total sculptural significance, we find on the wheel also the vegetal and the animal, the heavenly and the terrestrial, the men and women and the *mithun* which we find elsewhere. Consequently, it is possible to portary a complete range of Konark's sculptural values through a study of the Wheel. Considering, along with all this, the superb effect of movement which the artists have succeeded in creating, the Wheel of Konark is perhaps the finest example of any wheel in art. Indeed, it deserves a whole book to itself, and the least we can do is to give it a separate chapter.

The fifth category is that of the *sur-sundaries*, the beautiful women of the gods. The woman beautiful has been the theme of the various artists in many a place like Ajanta, Amravati, Khajuraho and Bhubaneswar. The *nayikas* and the *apsaras*, adorning the walls of temples or other surfaces at these places, provide a remarkable bouquet of feminine fragrance and indicate why woman has been regarded as the ally of Kamdev, god of passion, and an enemy of our calm of mind and control of the senses. Even the *yogis* could not look at these attractions and remain unmoved. But the beauties of Konark are not like those, which we find elsewhere. About them there is an air of vitality and zest for life, vigour and sensuousness which makes them worthy of heroes.

Feminine figures were, by this time, required to be placed in the temple as an important element of the total decoration. The injunctions of art required that. For the Orissan artists. there is the well known verse refering to the sixteen moods and modes of the *Shringar Nayika* which make her still more attractive for the mystic union:

"Alasi torna mugdha manini dal malika
Padmagandha darpanya vinyasa dhyan karshita
Ketki marma (divya) matri bhuti
Ehagra gundna (mukhya) nartaki shuksarika
Nupur padika ramya mardlayati shobhna
Etani shodshani ya alaso mukhya jayte.[16]

"In sixteen moods and poses—with the hands (arms) arched; with fingers on chin; with fingers on lip; holding the branch of a tree; with one hand holding flower, the other on hair; arranging hair; holding a mirror; hiding the front i.e. displaying the back; dancing; with a bird; putting on or taking off anklets; playing upon the *mridang;* yawning; mother and child; with a fly-whirl; playing among flowers."

This mystic union, the *mithun* constitutes the sixth category. On the temple of Konark, the *mithuns* are simply stupendous and, whether we like it or not, they make perhaps the most noteworthy component of the total decoration. Indeed, a

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very large amount of interest, which the average visitor has in Konark, is on account of its breathtakingly erotic figures. It is difficult for the foreigners and even for the Indian of today, the Hindu of today, to understand how such 'gross indecency' came to be sculpted on surfaces of religious sanctuaries and why the sanctity of the temple was violated by such a frank exhibition of things which humanity generally hides away. Let us, however, be in no hurry to judge the work of others. Perhaps there is reason enough for what they have done and if we understand rightly, may be, we shall see wisdom and not folly in their work. Anyway, the subject deserves fuller notice and we shall deal with it at some length in later chapters.

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6 THE WHEEL

IT HAS BEEN STATED EARLIER that one of the most significant and impressive features of the Sun Temple of Konark is its conception, as the chariot of the god. Nothing could be more apt than this form and shape given to the temple by its builders. Placed on the sea-shore, the monument must have seemed from afar like what it was intended to be : a resplendent golden chariot pulled by seven impetuous horses racing through the skies on gigantic wheels. There were twelve of these wheels on either side and each was an exquisite piece of workmanship. Forming an essential part of the structural design, the wheels are nevertheless, all, and every inch of them, carved, and so, they are both architecture as well as sculpture. As such, the 'Wheel of Konark' epitomises the entire art of Orissa and contains the quintessence of all that is beautiful in the Sun Temple. If nothing else had survived of this great monument but one wheel, it should have been possible for us to gauge the high level of excellence reached by the builders in the twin arts, or, rather, in that phase of the art of Orissa during which architecture and sculpture are indistinguishable, are fully integrated into a perfect whole. And this effect of the union of the two arts has been achieved with such amazing success that there is hardly anything in the world to match it. That is why, visitor after visitor is so visibly struck by these marvels of art. Deva Prasad Ghose states: "The 24 wheels of this chariot carved on the northern and southern sides of the *vimana* and *jagamohana*, with their rich and delicate decorations, and the seven horses, four on the north and three on the south of the flight of steps in front of the *jagamohana*, have evoked the wonder of the world."[1]

Of course, if the chariot had to be there, the wheels followed naturally. But what is most appropriate about the chariot of the Sun at Konark is the number of its wheels. The scriptures describe various kinds of chariots with differing number of wheels. There is the single-wheeled car, and the seven-wheeled, of the Rig Ved, and the hundred-wheeled car of Vishnu which, according to the Brahmavaivarta Purana, certain Brahman women beheld descending from the sky: "It was a most excellent car, made of gold, mounted with mirrors made of crystals, covered over with jewels, furnished with posts made of precious stones,

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capped with *kalasas* of valuable jewels, having white yak tail *cauris* hanging from different places, lined with cloth pure as fire, bedecked with garlands of *Parijata* flower, mounted on a hundred uniform wheels, quick moving like thought, and most charming."[2]

The chariot of the Sun as designed by the Orissan builders contains twelve wheels on either side—"twelve white wheels and twelve red wheels"; of the legend[3]—and there is a point to this number. It represents the twelve dark *(krishn)* and the twelve moonlit *(shukl)* fortnights of which the year is made up. Furthermore, the wheel has sixteen, eight thin and eight thick, spokes. These stand for the divisions of the day made by the Hindu. We have already seen that not only the wheels, but all items of the design have meaning and significance and are uniformly well thought out. Thus, for example—and as we have pointed out earlier—the number seven, of the horses, signifies seven days of the week and has been taken straight from the Rig Ved :

"Swift and all beautiful art thou, O Surya, maker of the light,
Illuming all the radiant realm.
Thou goest to the hosts of Gods, thou comest hither to mankind.
Hither all light to beheld,
With that same eye of thine where with thou lookest, brilliant Varuna,
Upon the busy race of men.
Traversing sky and wide mid-air, thou metest with thy beams our days,
Sun, seeing all things that have birth.
Seven Bay Steeds harnessed to thy car bear thee, O thou far seeing One,
God, Surya with the radiant hair."[4]

Three of these horses move forward representing the present, while two groups of two each turn this side and that indicating the past and the future. And as with such items, so with the rest, there is not a detail which does not have some point to it, which does not have some symbolic value or ritual meaning.

The wheel is a very rich symbol in Indian mythology, and for that matter, universally. Generally speaking, it stands for movement, time, unity, completeness, justice, perfection. We speak in terms of the wheel of time, the wheel of fortune, the wheel of life, the wheel of love, the wheel of *karm,* and the wheel of *dharm.* At Konark almost all these symbols and values get concentrated in the total meaning of this component. The wheel of Konark stands for time, because the chariot is that of the Sun and we measure time in accordance with the light of the Sun. It stands for movement and though today we know that it is the earth which is moving round the Sun, in practice, we still talk in terms of the Sun marching across from East to West, of its rising in the morning and setting in the evening: —

"The brilliant presence of the Gods hath risen,
the eye of Mitra, Varuna and Agni,

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The soul of all that moveth not or moveth, the
Sun hath filled the air and earth and heaven.
Like as a young man followeth a maiden, so doth
the Sun and Dawn, refulgent Goddess;
Where pious men extend their generations, before
the Auspicious One for happy fortune.
Auspicious are the Sun's Bay coloured Horses,
bright changing hues meet for our shouts of triumphs;
Bearing our prayers, the sky's ridge have they mounted,
and in a moment speed round earth and heaven;
This is the Godhead, this the might of Surya:
he hath withdrawn what spread o'er work unfinished;
When he hath loosed his Horses from their station,
straight over all Night spreadeth out her garment."[5]

It stands for unity and completeness obviously because it joins end to end, and it embraces within its circumference much which we otherwise put as diverse and contradictory. But because they are bound by the unity of the circle, are part of the total which is the wheel, therefore, all these contraries become one single harmonious whole. Again, such sense of direction as 'up' and 'down' and 'right' and 'left', is explained away by reference to the wheel, is merely illusory for, as the wheel moves, that which is up comes down and that which is down goes up; and, similarly, that which is right becomes left and that which is left becomes right. We begin to realise that it is we who have all this relative sense of direction and values; otherwise, in absolute terms, the wheel of time is merely a shadow on the backdrop of eternity. It is we who are caught in the illusion of Time, which its captive, the cycle of seasons, creates. Those who can look beyond that and rise above it have a different concept altogether of these matters; and, for them, even though time marches on, it matters not and there is no present and no past and no future but one single unbroken movement in which the so-called past catches up with the so-called future and *vice versa*. It is conceivable then that though we seem to be moving in a straight line from the past to the future through the present, all this is merely so much flux and flow in a perfect and perfectly regulated cycle. Once one begins to view the matter in this transcendental cosmic perspective, then all these surface values of past,present and future cease to have any validity.

We shall get back to the allegorical and the symbolic in a little while. Let us first have a look at the physical proportions and architectural and sculptural details of the wheels. Today, some of these wheels are "mere things of shreds and patches. Those that have weathered the storm and stress of centuries are marvels of elaborate and intricate designs, the maximum of decoration being squeezed into the minimum of space."[6] Each wheel is a huge monolithic piece of carving measuring 9 feet 8 inches in diameter with a rim of 8 to 10 inches

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which rises like an embossed surface and the 16 spokes which criss-cross and which are alternatively thick and thin.

If the Sun Temple is a miracle of art, one can say without exaggeration that the wheels of Konark are a miracle within the miracle. As we have said above, nothing of the kind exists anywhere in the world to match either this design as a whole or these giant wheels which show such delicate work that one is wonder-struck by the skill with which the effect of such light and exceptionally delicate work has been achieved on solid stone. In fact, and as has been observed above, so much of ornamentation has been packed into one wheel and of such different variety that one could go on studying a single wheel for a long, long while and not exhaust its riches. The flat surface which is in contact with the ground, as well as the rim, shows beautiful creeper-scroll work with innumerable insects, birds and animals carved as part of the scroll and making a magnificent design. We find on the rim lovely little elephants, swans. and deer. The thinner rim or spokes have a single, simple beaded design which provides a beautiful contrast to the far more profusely carved thicker spokes. The thinner spokes are straight and, in contrast to the thicker spokes, are shaped so that they broaden out after about two-thirds of their length away from the circumference so as to provide for a medallion for decoration. And what decoration! Each of these circular picture-like insets offers either a beautiful female figure in a dancing pose, or presents a *mithun*—figures in embrace. The protruding end of the axle offers a similar medallion carrying decoration of the same kind. The centre hub of the wheel, where the axle protrudes from, is, again, very richly carved. Indeed, there is literally not a millimetre on the entire wheel which is not carved and carved exquisitively.

Again, the wheel is not an isolated item. It is a part of the over-all design. To appreciate its full value, it should be viewed in its context, *in situ*, with the processions of elephants, or of men and horses, etc.—all that exquisite tracery of the *bada* which constitute the background; the pilasters flanking the wheel; and the sets of lovely figures, absolutely luscious statues and sculptures of great beauty, rising as it were from behind the wheel. Then, the whole creates such a beauteous effect that one cannot but keep on gazing at this rich concept and creation of the builders. Philosophically, we move, in the design of the wheel, from the world of vegetation and the animal kingdom at the edge of Existence, at the out-posts of the Universe, to the essence and meaning of life, represented by the dancing females and the *mithun*.

The temple of Konark is associated with the erotic in no uncertain way. In fact one might even say that the temple of Konark is erotic all over as against a certain scheme of the erotic in other temples, say, at Khajuraho or Bhubaneswar. Here, this element of the erotic is deliberately and intentionally spread and splashed everywhere. The wheel is no exception and shows erotic figures so that, in the Sun Temple's plastic ornamentation, the erotic element begins fairly low

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at the bottom and one does not have to go far to seek it. Considering that the builders knew what they were doing, that they knew that the visitor was bound to be able to view fairly clearly what was sculpted, it is better, instead of condemning them, to understand and comprehend the meaning and intention behind this erotic representation. We have said that the wheel is the symbol of life, the symbol of time, is the symbol of movement, is the symbol of fullness and perfection. As a child grows in time and ripens towards maturity, as it is perfected into a male or female, he or she must, in the course of time, in the fullness of time experience the erotic activity. Our life is not fulfilled and complete without this and so on the spokes we find this representation. The spokes are an essential component of the wheel. They check as well as help in the movement and thus regulate it. Within this inter-play of movement and its regulation, its checking, we have the need and significance of the erotic. The erotic activity is part of life and the movement of the wheel would be incomplete, our life would have no meaning, no fruition without the erotic activity. It is part of the Universal movement, of the Cosmic rhythm. Nay, according to the Tantric doctrine of Kamakala, all movement is a result of this—so that but for passion, the wheel of Life—of Universe—will not move, will not be.

All this is not new, only modified, even simplified. The germ of the entire idea may be found in the Rig Ved where at least one verse mentions a wheel with twelve spokes—which hint has been utilised here for making twelve wheels. In his learned work on some significant verses of the Rig Ved, V.S. Aggarwala quotes a *mantr* and comments:

"The Wheel of Twelve Spokes does not decay, revolving round the Heaven of Cosmic Order (Rita).

On this are established, O Agni, Seven Hundred and Twenty Sons of yours, joined together in pairs. This is the twelve-spoked Wheel of time, namely, Samvatsara as taken by all commentators. It is decayless and unaging and moving without friction, does not ever stop, and its revolving force goes on for ever. It is revolving round the heaven of Rita, that is Parameshthi or the Universal. This Time-Wheel is Surya or Sun which is revolving in the lap of the Universal or Rita. The solar system is on the manifest plane but it derives its gyrating movement from the Unmanifest universal. If we may translate the manifest dynamic movement as sukla Rajas, then its source in the Unmanifest Principle of Rest is named krishna Rajas, Surya is itself white rajas, but the source of its energy which is impelling it on its course is black rajas, Darkness or the principle of Night which is the substratum and source of the manifest world.

The dynamism that is behind the revolving Wheel of Time is due to the quality of Night and Day, which are both sons of Agni. There are three hundred and sixty days and three hundred and sixty nights spoken of as seven hundred and twenty sons of Agni. Agni is Prajapati whose dual aspect as Heat and Cold as Night and Day is the root cause of tension which explodes into the dynamism

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of the universe. On the basis of the dictum, *Atma vai jayate putrah,* each unit of Night and Day is a perfect form of Agni as the exemplar of the contraction and expansion implied in creation. It is like the going up and coming down of the Wheel or an epitome of the cosmic cycle."[7]

Obviously, the quality of the night and day which is symbolised by the different kind of spokes is broken by the symbolism of the erotic which stands for unity. Again, viewing the variety of the erotic figures, one may be puzzled for a time why the subtle and the gross, the clean and the obscene have been put together. One can explain this by reference to the 'Wheel of Love' mounted on which one forgets this difference between the low and the high. In his Kama-Sutra Vatsyayana refers to this and quotes some verses: "The whole subject of embracing is of such a nature that men who ask questions about it, or who talk about it, acquire thereby a desire for enjoyment. Even those embraces that are not mentioned in the Kama Shastra should be practised at the time of sexual enjoyment, if they are in any way conducive to the increase of love or passion. The rules of the Shastra apply so long as the passion of man is middling, but when the wheel of love is once set in motion, there is then no Shastra and no order."[8]

In any case, when the movement is as fast as wheels of the chariot of the Sun would make it we mortals can hardly distinguish between that which is seen and that which is 'obscene'.

The wheel of life and the wheel of *karma* are full of misery and unhappiness because of the illusory good we run after. The Buddh saw in the cycle of our life nothing but pain, saw it as a cycle of birth, growth, decay and death; and all above, below and through these, he saw nothing but suffering. That is why after years of meditation, during which he attained wisdom, he set, for the benefit of mankind, the wheel of law in motion at Sarnath, twenty-five hundred years ago. He was himself a personification of peace, of peace within and without. He was wise and knew and was unperturbed and calm. But he did not realise that the average human being was not likely to attain to Buddh-hood easily. Therefore, the Law which he preached did not last long and the Law of life proved superior to the Law of negation of life. Not before long, the wheel came full-circle, so to put it, and Nature had her revenge. Things were reversed altogether so that Mahayan and later on Vajryan completely falsified the pure doctrine which the Buddh had stood for. Nevertheless, new doctrines came up which expressed a better understanding of the laws of Nature and a new philosophy was evolved—the Philosophy of Delight; a new religion was conceived, the Religion of Enjoyment. In these new cults, many contraries were resolved. The wheel of Konark expresses and symbolises this rediscovery of and conformity to the eternal Law of Nature through following which one may attain to that state of wisdom, which is also bliss and which makes us one with the Supreme Being.

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It is true that, in life, the best among men may, thanks to the wheel of fortune, suffer untold agony. Witness, for example, the Wheel of Fire on which King Lear was bound :

"Cordelia : How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?
Lear : You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave;
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."[9]

Such is the terrible wheel to which all humanity is tied, the wheel of life which crushes us and on which we are all broken by that tyrant, Time, But at Konark all is peace and joy, for here Time itself is bound to Eternity as in the vision of Henry Vaughan:

"I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
All bound beneath it, Time in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
And all her train were hurled."[10]

The movement is swift; yet there is a sense of serenity, and all around there is nothing but life, life and song and dance and love and beauty and the 'souls' we see there are all 'souls in bliss'.

Here there is nothing but perfection in which every detail has its rightful place, is an entity and yet is nothing except a dot in the total pattern, a mere curve on the circle which is the Wheel of the Universe. It is in some such fashion that we should view the wheels of the celestial chariot of the Sun, of Vishnu-Surya, Lord of the World, at Konark.

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7 EROS IN THE TEMPLE

THE SCULPTURAL DECORATION of Konark's Sun temple includes a great deal of work which it is customary to characterise as indecent. This consists of innumerable postures portraying men and women engaged in various stages and varieties of the sexual act. Many of these variations on this theme of love, depicted here, have been described in the *Kamshastras*, India's ancient books on erotics, especially the *Kam-Sutr* of Vatsyayan. Indeed, some critics suggest that the erotic carvings here and, for that matter, elsewhere in India—in temples like those of Khajuraho, for instance, where such erotic carvings are found—are illustrations of these manuals of the art and science of love-making. What is more, such sculpture is presented, so obviously, nay, so emphatically, that one cannot but observe it. That is why even a single-sentence comment on this monument will usually allude to this element, and that is why too, we associate the Sun Temple, more than any other building in India, with the erotic.

These carvings have been the subject of much adverse comment and criticism for all these centuries since critics began to take notice of the temple at Konark. Recently, however, many Indian writers have made a serious attempt to view the matter dispassionately and, at times, even with a favoured bias; and quite a few western critics have also started conceding that there can be some point to the sculpting of these erotic figures on the sacred walls, and one or two have, indeed, argued well as to why these happen to be where we see them. Generally, of course, the condemantion continues. True, one finds in this condemnation also much praise which, willy nilly, has to be accorded because the erotic carvings are executed with the same skill and spirit with which the other sculptures of Konark are chiselled and our censure on ethical grounds notwithstanding, we cannot but admire the sheer loveliness of these sculptures as works of art. Also, one cannot help being genuinely impressed by the strange sense of delight, of the wholly unself-conscious abandon and the completely fearless enjoyment which are diffused all over the sculpture, so much so that something in us makes us feel rather small and acts as a reminder almost that perhaps the guilt lies in us, the beholders; lies in our consciousness and not in the *mithun* figures.

Nevertheless, the general attitude is that which, in the last century, was

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voiced by men like Stirling and, in this, by critics like Percy Brown. Of this erotic element in the Konark sculpture, the former wrote, in 1825: "There is much, however, about this remarkable building which it is difficult either to describe or comprehend . . . The exterior of the side walls, as of the roof, is loaded with a profusion of the richest sculptured ornaments . . . The human figures are generally male and female, in the most lewd and obscene, attitudes, frequently in the very act of sexual intercourse."[1] More than a century later, Percy Brown wrote in the same vein, though he also offered an explanation: "As already observed the sculpture with which this architecture is adorned is of an equally high order . . . Yet much of this relief work depicts subjects which, according to the ordinarily accepted standard in such matters, are grossly obscene. These indicate the emergence of a particular phase of Hinduism, known as Tantrism, the *maithuna* ritual of which is represented in the carving on this temple. Such a conception is not however limited to the temple of Konark; it finds expression at intervals not only in the art of the country but also in its literature, both prose and poetry. Nor is it confined to one region, for in its plastic form it appears on the temples of Khajuraho in Central India, at Madura, and in certain of the eleventh century temples of the Dekkan, as, for instance, at Balsane in Khandesh, and in the Asvera at Sinnar in the Nasik District . . . But nowhere are its observances more blatantly exploited than on the walls of the temple of the Sun at Konark, the figure sculptures of which are very largely representations of sexual perversion."[2]

Today, the outlook on sex-morality is considerably different. Also, there is a little more respect for the ways and views of others. Modern critics are, therefore, no longer emphatic in their denunciation. They try to understand this intriguing phenomenon. They attempt explanations and interpretations. They admire the beauty of the figures, appreciate the excellence with which they have been executed—yet, they are reluctant to reproduce such sculpture in their books. For instance, in his book, *The Art and Architecture of India,* Benjamin Rowland says: "Returning to the subject of the sculpture, we must be aware of the fact that the Black Pagoda has achieved a great deal of notoriety through the frankly obscene nature of most of the carving decorating the basement and also the exterior of the porch. This carving might be described as a literal illustration of theerotic recipes of the Kama Sutra; it represents numerous couples engaged in a great variety of amorous antics, some of them of a definitely perverse nature. These figures are representations of mithunas or auspicious pairs, which in less extreme forms were employed in Indian art from a very early period. Their embraces have been interpreted as typifying the idea of moksha or union with the divine, the achievement of that primordial unity broken at the time Purusa divided himself to create the world. Numerous quotations from the texts support such an interpretation, but it seems that at Konaraka the function of these endlessly repeated pairs in dalliance must have had something to do with actual orgiastic rites

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conducted in association with a special cult of the sun as universal fructifying force. It is unfortunate that, for obvious reasons, none of these mithunas can be reproduced in detail; each is a separate masterpiece of relief composition in which the feeling of movement as well as the marvellous suggestion of the participants melting with love, transcends the character of aetion." [3]

A similar approach is adopted by Robert Ebersole in his *The Black Pagoda* : "The Temple of the Sun at Konark has been criticized more than any other temple in India ; the pages of history are rent with the indignation of writers.

"Why has so much vehemence been directed toward the Black Pagoda? The reason may be found in the sculpture which depicts couples in every form of erotic play. These figures—from only a few inches in height to much larger than life size—represent the *maithuna*, or sexual intercourse, positions assumed by the gods and their female counterparts. Other figures depict what are today considered to be both heterosexual and homosexual perversions. There are illustrations of human-animal intercourse, and of complicated groups of people entwined in sexual diversions. The sculpture of the Black Pagoda has no parallel in any other known building. It is unfortunate that so few examples of this sculpture may be reproduced in publication, for the wonderful feeling of fluid form, the surety of stone translated into sensuous vigor and grace, was never surpassed by the more conventional sculpture." [4]

Obviously, what prevents these critics from reproducing that which they would like to reproduce is the ethical notions, in matters sexual, of which our society has been the victim for such a long time and from which the new generation is out to free itself. The modern young men and women cannot understand the fuss that is made about these matters. This is truer of the youngmen and women in the West. Anyway, people in the modern world are beginning to be less prudish about sex. Indeed, and whether it is in life, or in art and literature, there is a great deal of nakedness allowed. We have today nudist colonies and there are, if not open, certainly known clubs and haunts where promiscuous sexual activity is indulged in and "do what you will" seems to be the only rule of conduct. Therefore, the real objection is not to the writhing and twisting of desire-racked bodies in the sexual act, but to their presence in the temple.

Now, condemnation is easy. One can say that all this was very wicked and the people who made these temples and put such indecent, erotic sculpture in the temples, or allowed it to be put there, were bad people. It is bad to put in a temple any sculpture associated with Eros, any sculpture which creates in us indecent feelings and rouses our passion and desires which it is the duty of religion to teach us to control. One can also add, as most critics do, that even though these are indecent sculptures, shameful and shame-producing, yet somehow they are rather well done as works of art and the truth to nature has been extremely well wrought. It appears that those who made these carvings knew what they were about. They had studied the theme and subject exceptionally

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well, and they seemed to be expert in the art of love-making and well-versed in the knowledge of the various postures which are described as pleasure-yielding and capable of adding zest and variety to sexual enjoyment, in the various treatises on the science of love-making. It appears that the sculptors had been surreptitiously reading such manuals while in the temple and, to satisfy some impish whim, made these illustrations on these holy edifices. All this we can say and move on.

But it is more difficult not to do this and try, rather, to understand how such sculpture happens to be there and in such profusion and with such utterly frank intention of being there. One cannot mistake the intention nor can such work be done over-night, in a hurry, and without the knowledge of the master-builders or the patron who ordered the temple. Indeed, the erotic sculpture is so much a part of the total design that it could not have been put there except through absolutely clear injuctions that it had to be there. What is more, such sculpture is to be found not in one place in India but at several places, nay, all over India, and in many, many temples. It appears that this was an entire movement and not an isolated activity. Considering all this, the least we can do is to examine the phenomenon carefully. Condemning these sculptors or their work amounts to precious little, because the dead hands that sculpted this perfection of sexual poses in stone care not for what we say or think, and the stones will not feel our feelings nor be hurt by them. All in all, it might be more helpful to understand the reasons for the presence of such sculptures. Maybe that in addition to making for better comprehension of the phenomenon, this might enable us to arrive at some knowledge, some philosophy, some explanation, some religious insight, some high wisdom, some new and fresh light on the problems of human existence, some wonderful path of joy and liberation which might be of real value to us, and prove a source of help and inspiration in our own life.

With regard to the erotic sculpture at Konark, critics offer nearly a dozen major and minor explanations and interpretations. We have already touched upon two or three of these in the opinions quoted above. We saw, for instance, that according to Percy Brown as well as Benjamin Rowland, the erotic here should be linked with the Tantric creed, or as Rowland and Ebersole point out, with the illustration of the Kamasutra. Regarding this last, Pannikar writes in his introduction to an edition of the Kamasutra: "The influence of the *Kama Sutra* on the sculpture of India has attracted wide attention. To Westerners it was formerly a matter of some curiosity why some of the most famous Hindu temples should have sexual practices of different kinds sculptured on their walls. The most notable examples of such maithuna, or union sculptures, are at Konarak, Khajuraho, Belur, Halebid and other famous medieval temples. Nor is this a feature only of medieval temples. There are Bacchanalian scenes in the Ajanta caves which are predominantly of Buddhist inspiration. In Nagarjunikonda, a most remarkable centre of Buddhist architecture and sculpture, there are many

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panels depicting maithuna scenes. Many of them could be identified as sculptural versions of Vatsyayana's sutras—sometimes as interpreted by poets ..The influence of Vatsyayana on these sculptured forms can be seen in their attitudes and poses. A careful study of the sculptures at Konarak, Khajuraho and other famous temples will show how closely the artist in most cases has followed the sutras of our text." [5]

Coming to other views and theories, it is said by some that the erotic sculpture wards off the evil eye and it was customary to put some erotic sculpture in every temple. This, of course, cannot apply to the case of the Konark temple because here it was not a question of one or two sculptures being put to meet this requirement but there is a veritable plethora of such work and with clear intent and purpose. Then, there is the explanation that there was much warfare taking place and the population had been decimated. It was necessary, therefore, that people be induced to indulge freely in sexual activity so that soldiers should be available to the king. Another view is that this was an attempt to provide sex education and the temple being a point of common assembly, being the institution where the total instruction of the mind is supposed to be taken in hand, these walls were regarded as the fittest place for such education. Some critics maintain that it was activity of a degenerate age and that there is nothing more to the erotic sculpture than a true reflection of the low morals of the people of that period. Added to this is the view that the kings and priests had hit upon this device to add to their revenues. Such wicked sculpture helped to attract the pilgrims to the temple and so add to the wealth of the state as well as the particular sanctuary. It is well known that the *devdasis*, the temple dancers, were generally a part of the sanctuary's retinue. One wild opinion is that the sculptures were advertisement of their charms. Anyway, the *devdasis* and such erotic sculpture could come handy to further these materialistic interests of priests and kings.

Again, and in the case of the Sun-temple, certainly, there can be the explanation that erotic sculpture is part of the total concept of the temple where the builders have presented everything which the Sun will light up, have depicted all activity upon earth and symbolised, especially, the idea that the light and warmth of the Sun creates life. Ananda Coomaraswamy regards this as the right reason in this case, although he connects it with another philosophic interpretation, namely, that of Illusion and Reality: "The whole building is covered with a profusion of remarkable and beautiful carvings symbolising the fertilising and creative power of the Sun. It is a hymn to life a frank and exquisite glorification of creative forces in the universe.

"The unusual predominance of this kind of sculpture at Konarak is to be explained as symbolising the power of the Sun but similar carvings occur in smaller proportionate quantity in many other places. Love and desire are part of life. Life is a veil behind or within which is God. The outside of the temple

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is an image of this life, Samsara, and the carvings on it represent everything that belongs to Samsara and perpetuates illusion...Within, in an empty chamber, the image of the god is alone lit up by tinyla mpss een from far away by the approaching worshipper. This symbolism of phenomenal life as an embroidered veil beyond which the devotee must pass to find his god has perhaps always and everywhere been present, whether consciously or not, in the mind of Indian cathedral-builders."[6]

And talking of the erotic sculpting of the Sun-temple of Konark only, there is the legend connected with the religion of love and desire which prevailed in the time of Krishn and which indirectly led to the construction of the temple through the curse pronounced on Samb, so that the scenes of such harem life as Samb saw are depicted here.

Of the major theories, there is the one that these erotic sculpture are the doings, or the mis-doings, of certain sects, the *Vam Margis*, Tantrics and the Shakts, who accept five *makars*—*madya*—wine, *matsya*—fish, *mans*—meat, *mudra*—grain, coin, ritual gesture etc., and *maithun*—the sexual act,—as essentials for their worship. The sex-act is supposed to be a corner-stone of this ritual and their worship culminated in this.

Another opinion is that the visitor to the temple is being tested and warned. The devotee is being warned against the attractions of existence, against all the illusory phenomena found in life and in the world and is, in a way, being tempted to go back. Or else, he is being tested whether he will be attracted by this even now. For, if the devotee has come to see and meet the Lord, he is not concerned with anything except thoughts of God, he sees nothing except God. He is or ought to be indifferent to whatever is depicted on the walls, whether poses of sex or postures of *Yog*. All these are as nothing to him. Indeed, he has seen nothing. In the early Buddhist thought, there is the oft-repeated tale that a man was asked whether he had seen a woman passing and his answer was that he did not know whether it was a man or a woman but a dead body had walked away on two legs. The Buddhist saw, in every living being, nothing but lurking death. Here it was the other way round. Whether it was men and women making love or killing each other, whether it was dirt or delight, whether it was flowers or thorns, in every form of existence there was only one Essence Everlasting. To condemn, therefore, these things was tentamount to recognising the existence and validity of all these as separate entities.

Finally, we have the view that this union of man and woman is symbolic of the union of the individual soul and God; that this completes the circle beginning with the point when One was converted into two, male and female, to afford Him delight through reunion later, or to create the vale of illusion, to beguile us into a sense of duality though, in fact, man and woman were not two separate beings but were essentially One. And the Buddhist, who had at one time seen a conflict between *sansar* and *nirvan*, between sex and salvation, was now, like the

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Hindu who had earlier created the anti-thesis of Yoga and sex, equating these two as identical. Through the high reaches of philosophy and subtle and intricate reasoning and theorisation, the Hindu as well as the Buddhist had brought about a total reversal, and regarded Kam no longer as an enemy but as the instrument and vehicle of our salvation. These new philosophies offered liberation, not through sorrow and suffering and hard penance, but through enjoyment, through *Mahasukh*, through bliss which had the nature and character of God himself. The ways were many and we find Shakti Puja and *Sahaj-yan* and the *Vajr-yan* and all the Tantric schools putting forth seemingly different views and practices; but basically all these religions and philosophies were aimed at the synthesis of elements which were earlier regarded as opposites and as antithetic.

Stella Kramrisch gives a clear analysis of this approach, of the philosophic ground:

"Mithuna, the 'state of being a couple', is the plastic symbol of regained wholeness. In the beginning, says the Brhadarnyaka Upanisad, was only the self in the shape of a person. Looking around, he saw nothing else but the self. He was afraid. Therefore, one who is alone is afraid. He then thought to himself: 'Since there is nothing else than myself, of what am I afraid? Thereupon his fear passed away. Assuredly, it is from a second that fear arises. He had no delight. Therefore, he who is alone has no delight. He desired a second. He became as large as a woman and a man in close embrace... From that arose husband and wife. He united with her.

"Fear and loneliness prompt the Monad, the all encompassing principal Person, to desire a second, and by this desire, the Monad embraces what it desires and is as yet undivided. The prinicipal person causes separation, in order to unite with the object of his desire. In this new united form, he is free from craving, free from fear. "As a man, closely embraced by a beloved woman, knows nothing more of a without or a within, so does the person, when embraced by Foreseeing knowledge (gnosis), the Self, know nothing more of a without within. This is his true form in which his desire is fulfilled, in which the Self is his desire, in which he is without desire, free from sorrow.' ...

She refers to the ultimate purpose of these erotic scenes on the temple walls: "They represent concrete rites in which the human eros is mastered as a means of obtaining supreme bliss (mahasukha) of non-duality. In these rites, the body is made to act free from the conditions and purpose imposed by nature on the union of the sexes. Seminal emission is arrested and the seed must not fall in the ritual embrace. By this control of his body man surpasses the mortal condition and is god-like. The asceticism of voluptuonsness rarifies the intensity of the embrace in its controlled abandon, when man, overcoming his mortal condition, is one with his sakti or the creative power itself... If, however, over and above the significance of its theme, a Mithuna carving 'can be enjoyed with a kind of enjoyment different from direct experience, 'that is, if intrinsically it is

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a work of art, then this enjoyment 'is of the same order as the tasting of the Supreme Brahman'."[7]

Though the above is said mainly with reference to Hindu belief, basically all this holds true for the Buddhist no less than the Shaivite and the Vaishnav. All of them rely on the same principle, and resort to almost the same practices: Dr. Dasgupta sums up this position thus: "The secret yogic practices, round which grew the paraphernalia of the different Sahajiya cults, belong neither strictly to the Buddhist fold nor exclusively to the Hindu fold; they are essentially yogic practices, which by their association with different theological systems, either Buddhist or Hindu, have given rise to different religious cults. The most important of the secret practices is the yogic countrol of the sex-pleasure so as to transform it into transcendental bliss, which is at the same time conducive to the health both of the body and mind. This yogic practice with its accessories, being associated with the philosophy of Siva and Sakti, stands at the centre of the net-work of the Hindu Tantric systems, and when associated with the speculations on Prajna and Upaya of later Buddhism, has given rise to the Tantric Buddhist cults including the Buddhist Sahajiya system; and again, when associated with the speculations on Krsna and Radha conceived as Rasa and Rati in Bengal Vaisnavism, the same yogic practice and discipline has been responsible for the growth and development of the Vaisnava Sahajiya movement of Bengal."[8]

It is not easy to comprehend all this abstract thought. Indeed, it is because of this difficulty that all these concrete symbols were worked out for the common man. Nevertheless, we must understand and interpret the sculpture at Konark and elsewhere as depicting philosophic and religious values, as a symbol-language conveying, in these symbols of ritual and worship, a visible image of the union of the transcient and the eternal, of the individual soul and the universal, or, we shall feel cheated and frustrated. Only when we get on to these explanations do we find a true clue to this mystery. Then the gates are unlocked and we begin to see things clearly and all confusion and conflict in respect of our judgement of these erotic sculpture evaporate. No longer do we admire these with reservations; no longer do we feel a sense of shame in their presence. No longer do we see them with half-averted eyes, but can have a frank and open look at them. And no longer do we feel hesitant to reproduce them in our books. Now, looking at them with this understanding and in this light, we can admire them whole-heartedly as wonderful work of art, as first-rate sculpting, as exceptionally truthful presentation of the act of love, in such amazing variety and with a wonderous sense of joy which is akin to ecstasy, and as such a clear exposition of the doctrines which were conceived and developed during a period of reaction, against, and re-evalvation of, the philosophy of negation preached by the Buddh.

All these doctrines were based on one idea, that of liberation through love, of deliverance through desire, of salvation through sex. We shall examine this novel approach at some length in the next chapter.

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8 SEX AND SALVATION

WE HAVE SEEN THAT SEVERAL explanations are offered and seem plausible in respect of the presence of erotic sculptures on the walls of the Sun Temple. It is quite possible that many factors contributed, some little and others more, to bring about this phenomenon, that many different agencies were at work to achieve the same end. It was one of those manifestations wherein there is spontaneous universal desire at work. Almost without the need of comparing notes or attempting any coordination, different minds, different groups of men, were working out formulas to admit and justify a way of thought and belief which made for the return of sex and desire freely into the life of the people. It hardly mattered whether this was done in the name of an easy way—*sahajyan* or a hard way—*vajrayan*, whether the justifications were metaphysical and religious or merely social and political. So long as men and women gained their lost paradise, so long as sanity and health were brought back into the realm of sex, and love and desire into the relationship which obtained between the male and the female, all was right. It is, therefore, not our intention to necessarily contradict or deny the validity of this explanation or that when we set out to view a particular thesis more closely. We have already said that to maintain, *apropos* these sculptures, that a complete illustration of the Kam Shastras was being attempted; or that certain sects were writing in secret language, in some code, doctrines and instructions pertaining to their religious beliefs and practices; or that these sculptures are the symbolic representation of Kam-Kala, not the art of love but that high philosophy which shows that the manifest world is merely the result of the love-play of the god Shiv and the goddess Parvati; or that, consequent upon Tantiric thought and Shakti *sadhana*, a new system of *Yog* which relied upon enjoyment and indulgence of the senses as its basic tenet and practice was being evolved, would be valid. We are, therefore, not suggesting that this view is true and that one is not; but we are showing that all these various strands and threads got interwoven into what, broadly speaking, appears to be a synthesis of the opposites of the by-gone days. In considering the matter thus, we can afford to ignore sectarian differences and surface distinctions and get to the essentials of what seems to be a fairly commonsensical story.

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It all began with the tremendous upheaval caused by the enlightenment of an exceptionally gifted man, the Buddh. Before his time, poor mortals seemed to have thought that to comprehend God, the universe, the phenomenon called Life, and the secrets and subtleties relating to these was, generally speaking, far beyond their capacity and the best course for them was to remain within the limitations which Nature seems to have imposed on us. It is not possible for us to find out whether this is really true but one should think that the men and women who lived in earlier times lived close to the rhythm of nature, following their instinct, and accepting the course of existence and the scheme of things as they found these—accepting these with full faith in the Maker, and neither questioning Him nor criticising Him for all that. Such people found that there was a strange attraction between the two sexes, that, at a certain stage in life, the stage at which boys and girls suddenly became men and women, a powerful force operated which they gave the name of desire or sexual passion; that, acting under the spell of this mutual attraction, men and women became husband and wife and they copulated and begat children whom they brought up with care and affection. All this was natural and they took it as a matter of course. Then they found that, in due season, their sexual powers as well as their desire for sexual enjoyment grew less intense and the body became old and decayed. The youth of yesterday became the aged of today and through this process of natural decay or through disease the mortals edged slowly but surely towards that brink beyond which lay the region of the God of Death. Then an event took place which closed the story of their existence, even as it does today, which had begun with the event called birth. All this was as normal a matter as the seasons of the year or the movements of the sun and the stars, and they found nothing wrong with this state of affairs. They were glad that they understood it and moulded their lives accordingly. An elaborate system of thought and philosophy was evolved in which, through proper education and training, through discipline of body and mind, the people were taught to comprehend and conform to this cycle of birth and the growth of desire, passionate desire, for and attachment to life, and then, in due course of time, a natural decline, a period of decay, and, finally, death. To console the mind a little, different concepts were also worked out as to what happened after one ceased to be. Whether people believed in hell or heaven or in the philosophy of re-birth or some other method of explaining the hereafter, are mere matters of detail and, in any case, they seemed to have proved quite satisfactory explanations for the men and women of those ages.

Then came, this man, the Buddh. Like Eve and Adam, specially Eve, in the Biblical story of what happened in the Garden of Eden, this man was also tempted to *know*, to know fully, to understand the mystery which is life and to conquer whosoever was the enemy of man—the enemy of man for, like the Christians, the Buddh too viewed the world and life as composed of sorrow and suffering. He had seen things, his delicate and exceptionally sensitive mind had experienced

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that which led him to regard life as woe and woman, representing desire, as the cause of this woe. His kind heart and fine sensibility made for a rather subjective vision so that he painted life black, in despondent shade, and found it no better than a mesh in which man was caught. Although, on the surface and at times, things seemed fair and people seemed happy, but, in fact, all this was an illusion and, in reality, there was nothing but suffering and sorrow for each and every one, sooner or later, but surely and without exception.

Now, one result of meddling with things which were forbidden expressly or which our commonsense tells us to regard as beyond our ken, to regard as ground which is not for us to tread, for only fools rush in where angels would dread to go, is that, once these things are disturbed, it is very difficult to restore them to their pristine state. In this sense history never repeats itself and, after every completed round, the earth may get back to the same point but it is not the same earth and on it it is not the same people. Ever since they ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Adam and Eve have never again been the Adam and Eve of the pre-Temptation days. In the same way, the post-Budhist humanity was never the men and women who had lived before this man dared to do what Eve did in the Christian story. That is the moral of the tale which is writ so clearly and large on stone and in scriptures and, more than that, in the strange philosophies which came to be followed and practised in later ages by the followers even of the Buddh. Attempt after attempt was made to restore the balance and to bring about the same kind of approach and attitude to life. Indeed, things were taken to the extreme, again, in the hope that this excess would cancel the earlier excesses on the other extreme. Actually, things went on worsening. It is true that all arguments and logic were pressed into service to justify the new stand and the new ritual but it was a fore-gone conclusion that all such efforts and attempts were fore-doomed to failure. Anyway, we are not concerned with the rightness and wrongness of it all. We are concerned merely with the how and why and the consequences.

The how and why are simple. First, the why. The Buddh could not even himself fully renounce the world. After having achieved Buddh-hood, full wisdom, he is supposed to have been pursuaded by the gods to stay on and preach his philosophy and wisdom to the rest of mankind, for their benefit. He chose, therefore, to live on and not seek that total extinction, that something which he styled as *nirvan*. He lived on as the man praised in the *Geeta* by Krishn, a man completely detached, involved as to action, but otherwise unconcerned and calm. He had intense and immense pity and deep sympathy and an all-embracing feeling of fellowship and brotherhood for all; but he was wise enough to stay apart. All the same, by the mere fact of existence, he demonstrated that life had won, that Desire had conquered even him by making him stay on. What is more, he was obliged, during the course of the years of his Buddh-hood, to make concessions for others who were, not as perfect as he, and were still far

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from 'arriving'. One of the things which he was constrained to do against his wish was to admit into the fold that special enemy of mankind, that particular ally of Mar, the god of Desire, that instrument of our downfall, that personification of Desire, therefore, so far as the male is concerned, namely, the famale of the species, woman. Earlier, he had asked the monks to completely shun women. Now, before his death, he was prevailed upon to permit women to become nuns and Nature must have smiled at this. Nuns were but women and the monks were but men and between them there arose once again the same attraction which men and women have always felt, the same which was to find expression later on among the early Christians, and is known as *agape*. Call it sisterly, call it brotherly, call it Platonic, call it religious or cosmic romance, call it what you will, Nature has only one name for all this—and it is her way of carrying on with the human race. She insists upon keeping this powerful attraction between the sexes alive because through this she perpetuates the species. She is not bothered about the philosophies and theories of religion, morality, wisdom, and all that. And so, the Buddhist started veering round to the old, the only, way. The work of the world must go on, as the work of the world had been going on even during the forty-five years in which the Buddh had lived after his Buddh-hood. Even if a few thousands or a few millions or a few hundred million people took to voluntary renunciation, ceased to be victims of 'Desire', and abstained from meeting and mating with members of the opposise sex, so what? There were still vast numbers of the human race who went on following the healthy dictates of Nature. After all, it was Nature who was creating men and women and she wanted them to do and to carry on *her* work, keep *her* world going, and to fall in with *her* design and intention or with those of whoever is responsible for the making and the working of the universe. What is more, even the followers of Buddh were obliged to see the validity of these arguments and though they did not want to contest what the Buddh had preached, nevertheless, they found out ways and means of reconciling their thought with what the Buddh had thought and in this they succeeded admirably.

What the Buddh achieved came, in essence, to two broad points. First, it was claimed that there was an opposition and antipathy between *nirvan* and *sansar*, that the human beings or, for that matter, all living creatures were caught in the web of the *sansar* and that we had to make an earnest effort, through following the path indicated by the Buddh, to liberate ourseleves from this net of existence, from this chain of cause and effect, from the cycle of birth and re-birth and attain to *nirvan*—a state of non-being. Secondly, and as a corollory of the above, he found that our arch enemy was desire which manifested itself through our senses and our sensual needs and longings and, therefore, what we had to do was to learn to curb our desire, to control our senses and to deny them indulgence. Above all we had to avoid sexual indulgence because, for the man, the woman and, for the woman, the man personified the principle of life

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and desire, and through their coming together, through union, the *mithun*, there would be continuation of this misery of existence for other creatures. The *mithun*, therefore, became a symbol of sin even as it did in the Christian way of thinking.

In the new scheme of things, therefore, what the thinkers had to do was to make *mithun* a symbol of virtue and wisdom. How was this done ? In the first instance, the Buddh was given a *shakti*; of his own; and the goddess herself was made to be *Pragya*, the wisdom of the Buddh. Now, symbolically, just as the Sun and the light go together, so the Wise one and his wisdom would be together. Wisdom, was, therefore, merely symbolically female and *Pragya* was not apart from, but a part of, the Buddh. The *mithun*, the state of oneness, therefore, portrayed the union of the Buddh and his *Buddhi*, *Pragya*, and so became holy. Another way of representing the same thing was to make *nirvan* not separate from *sansar* but to regard the two as aspects, as different facets, of the same substance. By a queer logic, *nirvan* ceased to be non-being, but was very soon allowed to fit into the pattern and concept of the Hindu thought wherein, too, the idea of *mukti* exists as of liberation, but it is liberation from life by merging into the infinite, escape from the finite and the limited which is our life and existence, into oneness with God, union with Him, who is bliss, joy everlasting. This concept of escape from the limited and sorrow-laden human existence and merging into the Being who is infinite and joyful, is important. One more step was needed and that is where the post-Buddhist world gained over the pre-Buddhist world. The concept of *mukti* and *nirvan*, of liberation, as merging into God, and so attaining immortality and everlasting joy were nothing new. These existed earlier also. What was new, however, was that they were now equated with this world and not regarded as distinct and separate from this world.

This was an amazing development. In the earlier part of the story, there was a clear-cut system of *Yog* which involved fairly rigorous practices and a great deal of self-denial and penance which enabled men to rise above attachment and self-indulgence and to reach a state known as the state of *samadhi*, of ecstacy, of a higher reaching of the mind and the soul which made one feel free, liberated, from life and united with God. Now, this difficult and arduous course was no longer necessary. Those who lived normally the life not of a *yogi* but of a *bhogi*, also attained *nirvan*, nay, attained *Mahanirvan*. It is this easy and natural way which was now evolved as *the* way.

This new way was worked out at two levels. One is known as *bhakti*, devotion to God. It is also called *Bhakti Yog* and is supposed to be the path of love, of utter faith in and surrender to God. For the common people, this was the easier way without all those tedious *Yogic* practices, and it also enabled countless more people to attain to a sense of oneness with God. It was a kind of democratisation of religion and extending the right to God, so to put it, to

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everybody. Secondly, this easy way applied to a particular field in which, earlier, both because of the philosophy of *Yog* and the Buddhist-Jain taboos, there was great rigidity. We mean the sphere of sex. Here woman had been regarded as enemy. Indeed, she had been banished from the realm of man. She now came back and came back with a bang. She came back as more sacred and holier then ever. She became the Goddess, greater than the earlier deity, God, and it was now held that it was through her activity that the world had come into being and continued to be. God was passive; it was the Goddess who was the active agent, the power, *shakti*. Each god was provided with a goddess, with a *shakti*, and the gods and their goddesses were made to live and act almost like human beings. Additionally, every woman, certainly every virgin, was regarded as a representative of the Goddess and men could worship the Goddess in every virgin. This worship of woman became, at one time, quite common and still exists. Along with the return of woman came what woman had been banished for, the sexual act, *mithun*, and now this also was raised to the highest level. The human body became sacred and copulation became an act of holiness, an instrument of liberation, a matter of bliss which itself was now equated with liberation.

It was a simple formula. Liberation was equal to joy. *Nirvan* and *anand* were one and the same thing. Nay, one without the other was meaningless and incomplete and their combination was represented by the *mithun*, by man and woman together. This togetherness also symbolised the return of parted halves to the essential wholeness which, according to the Hindu myth of creation, God enjoyed before He had parted Himself into male and female. The concept of the *Ardh-Narishwar*, Shiv Androgynous, God as half-Parvati and half-Shiv, also indicates the same approch. This was called the *Sahajyan*, the easy, the natural, path, and those who would attain *nirvan* through indulgence, would get to liberation through love, could do this easily in the name of the new philosophies and through their faith in Shiv and Parvati or Krishn and Radha, so that the stories of both these divine couples showed a new way of salvation through sex, an easy path which everybody could follow, which consisted merely of doing that which Nature wants us to do. Only, it was once again clearly indicated and now widely followed. And, it is this, the theory and practice of this new philosophy, which we find sculpted on sacred walls.

Essentially the same but apparently a different approach was adopted by the Buddhists. Instead of calling things by their right names right from the start they first named their way the hard way, *Vajryan*, and then evolved the *Sahajyan*. *Vajryan* was created through the concepts of the Hindu *Yog*. The idea here was to take to the philosophy of the *coitus-reservatus*; the male organ was made to symbolise the thunder-bolt or the diamond both of which are supposed to be exceptionally hard. The parallel could be seen in the concept of the *Shivling*, the flint hard symbol of the male organ which is worshipped. The idea is to

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attain such tremendous virility that the male organ stays as hard as *vajr*, as stone or diamond. It is well known that in the act of copulation, at the stage called tumesence, the male organ achieves an extraordinary hardness which is so distinctly different from its normal state. Now in normal sexual intercourse, this state of hardness lasts only for a limited period before detumesence takes place. It appears that these new sages wanted to prolong the moment of excitement and bliss and a system was evolved in which, through a perverted view of *Yog*, an eternity of *bhog* could be enjoyed. Through the so-called sexo-*yogic* practices one attains to a state of self-control in which there would be no detumesence and the *Vajr* state of the organ would be sustained indefinitely. It is obvious that this will also help in obviating the fear of begetting which lies at the base of copulation and which keeps men and women or kept them so far, generally from committing the sin of fornication and the crime of adultry indiscriminately and recklessly. If it were possible to develop the *Vajr* state and affect the *coitus reservatus* indefinitely, it will be a matter of exceptional enjoyment conforming almost to the sense of having attained to eternal bliss, and also indulging in the sexual act in that way would keep the woman from suffering the consequence of love-making. The monks and the nuns would be free to pluck the flower of sex, without fear of the fruit of unwanted children. A philosophy embodying such an attitude was evolved and those who were prepared to train for these new *Yogic* practices would achieve *mahasukh*, Great Delight, which was both life and liberation, *sansar* and *nirvan*. It is obvious that so far as the Buddh is concerned, these new philosophies reduced to mockery all that he had stood for.

Anyway, it is this philosophy to which we have to refer in the context of the values portrayed at Konark. The women, temptations and attractions of man's world, are all there and there are the *apsaras*, too, to adorn the temple. But now all these do not have to be put out of the way; rather, they are the way to God, to the Goddess. In the older philosophy of *Yog*, they acted as hindrances, and one got over thsee hindrances through self-mortification. Now, because of this philosophic and religious evolution, *nirvan*, liberation, became equated with *sansar*, the world, and *sansar* became equated with *anand*, bliss, so that the negative and the positive became one, were found to be partaking of the same essence, were regarded as not antithetic but as capable of a perfect synthesis. Nay, they demanded that synthesis for this synthesis spelt the essential harmony of the universe.

Sex ceased to be an obstacle; woman ceased to be an hindrance. Sex and woman, body and senses, all these became the means of obtaining *nirvan*, and of reaching bliss. In fact, a still more significant development took place and the body itself was regarded as Bliss; the sex-act became *Nirvan;* woman was God.

In the erotic sculptures of Konark, it is this synthesis that is at work; it 's this new amalgamation of the contraries, which is in evidence. There are *mithuns* galore but there is not an iota, no trace whatever of the act being anything but

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a matter of joy. The bliss and serenity which mark the faces of the lovers have to be seen to be appreciated. Of course, all this erotic activity is backed by high philosophy, deep religious thought, lofty ideas, and there is little wonder, therefore, that these lovers should exeude not lewdness but such delight, such serenity. Here there is no doubt as to the rightness of the act and no fear of anything; so that bliss alone can be the result of it all. The lust which ends in disgust and the passion that cloys—all these have no validity so far as the world of Konark is concerned. Here they have taken care of such possibilities by converting the instant into eternity. Through preaching the *Yog* of *Bhog* in which the act is ever desired but never done, the solution is reached of not only converting the transient into the everlasting but of making that which is often associated with shame and sorrow into something of value and beauty; something which, instead of becoming an obstacle, serves as a way and a means for uplifting ourselves, and transporting our being into a world of that bliss and joy which ordinary mortals experience for a moment, but which these men and women may enjoy for ever because they are masters of the great secret of achieving and sustaining this bliss. They are the liberated-in-life; they are one with God, because here each man is Shiv and each woman Parvati, because all these are engaged in the cosmic romance where Kam is no longer an enemy but is an ally. It is the same old truth, that nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so. So long as men and women were thinking of sex and desire as something wicked and evil that it became for them. The moment the new philosophers stopped thinking of desire as something evil, started regarding it as something pleasant and noble, good and desirable, it changed its character and became something which could be used, and was used, as a valid path, as the prim-rose path of dalliance which could lead to paradise, to deliverance.

With the discovery of these easy paths and pleasant methods of obtaining life's highest prize, new vistas of delight and liberation were opened and new hymns of praise were sung—hymns which spoke of a life that moved from light, from joy to joy. The erotic sculptures of Konark seem to portray the same hymns in stone. They offer to us the glimpse of a world, gist of a philosophy, which the West is beginning to get interested in, but which the East, which India has chosen to forget. This is no philosophy of Hedonism, no peurile pursuit of pleaure, no praise of folly or worship of sensual indulgence. It is a proper doctrine evolved within a full-fledged frame-work of religious thought, practice whereof is not easy, nay, can be terribly difficult; and only the elect, the *Kaul*, may succeed. The path is narrower and sharper than the razor's edge and only a few may reach the highest stage of realisation. The minimum requirement is that one has to be totally above all consideration of right and wrong. It is obvious that if we have to even qualify for pursuing such a course, we have to get over our notions of vice and that is why the essentials for this worship are the very things which people regard, or regarded in the earlier philosophies,

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as bad. By the same things through which we fall we may be lifted also—this is the quintessence of the new philosophy. In any case, all is illusion and surely our notion that fish and flesh, wine or woman, or song and dance and music, that indulgence of the senses, that body and sex can be wicked has to be got over. Thal is why in the highest stage, we have the doctrine which, according to the *Cheenachar*, Chinese Practice, is summed up in the words of the Buddh: "Be thou ever among women, for women are God, women are bliss, women are salvation." In the Hindu thought this view is represented by the concept of the *Ardh-Nariishwar*, God as half man and half woman, and in the doctrine of *Kam Kala*, where the Devi is the initiator, through her desire, for evolving the universe, is the active agent without whom Shiv himself is powerless. In the sculpture of Konark, we see the opponents of yesterday, Shiv and Kam, and Shiv and Parvati reconciled and the eternal conflict between Sex and *Yog* is resolved for ever. Henceforth the sex-act will not stand for the fall, for sin, for transgression, for wickedness, deserving the punishment of existence, but will be, instead, a symbol of all that is good, all that is pure, all that is desirable, all that is joyous and all that is holy. In the world of Konark, it is a symbol of Divinity and of Grace, capable of conferring both bliss and liberation, joy as well as peace. As such, the erotic sculptures are no postures and poses of indecency and lewdness, but a direction to a path worth exploring, and a challenge to our own views and wisdom to achieve the same level of joy and serenity as we see portrayed in the Sun Temple of Konark.

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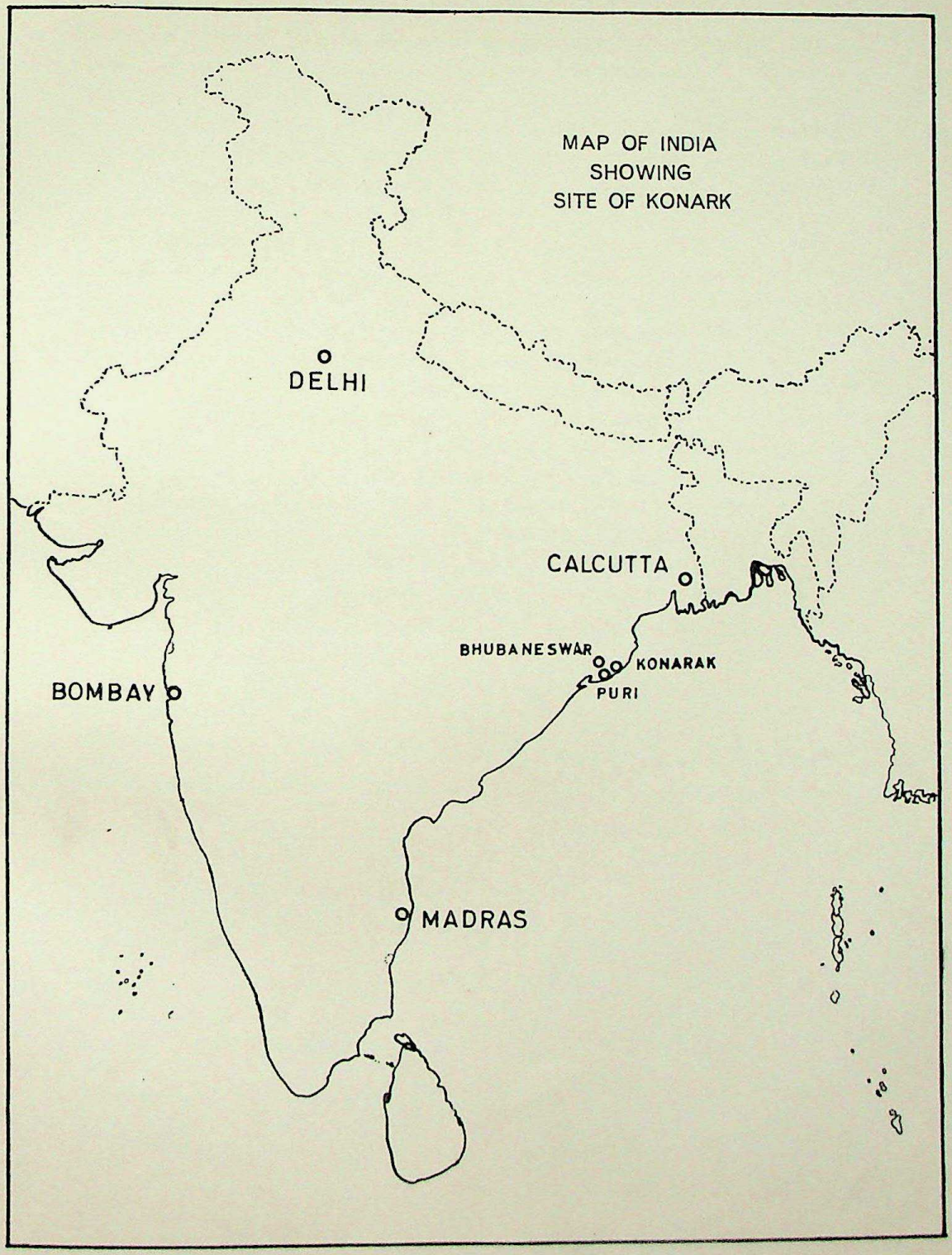

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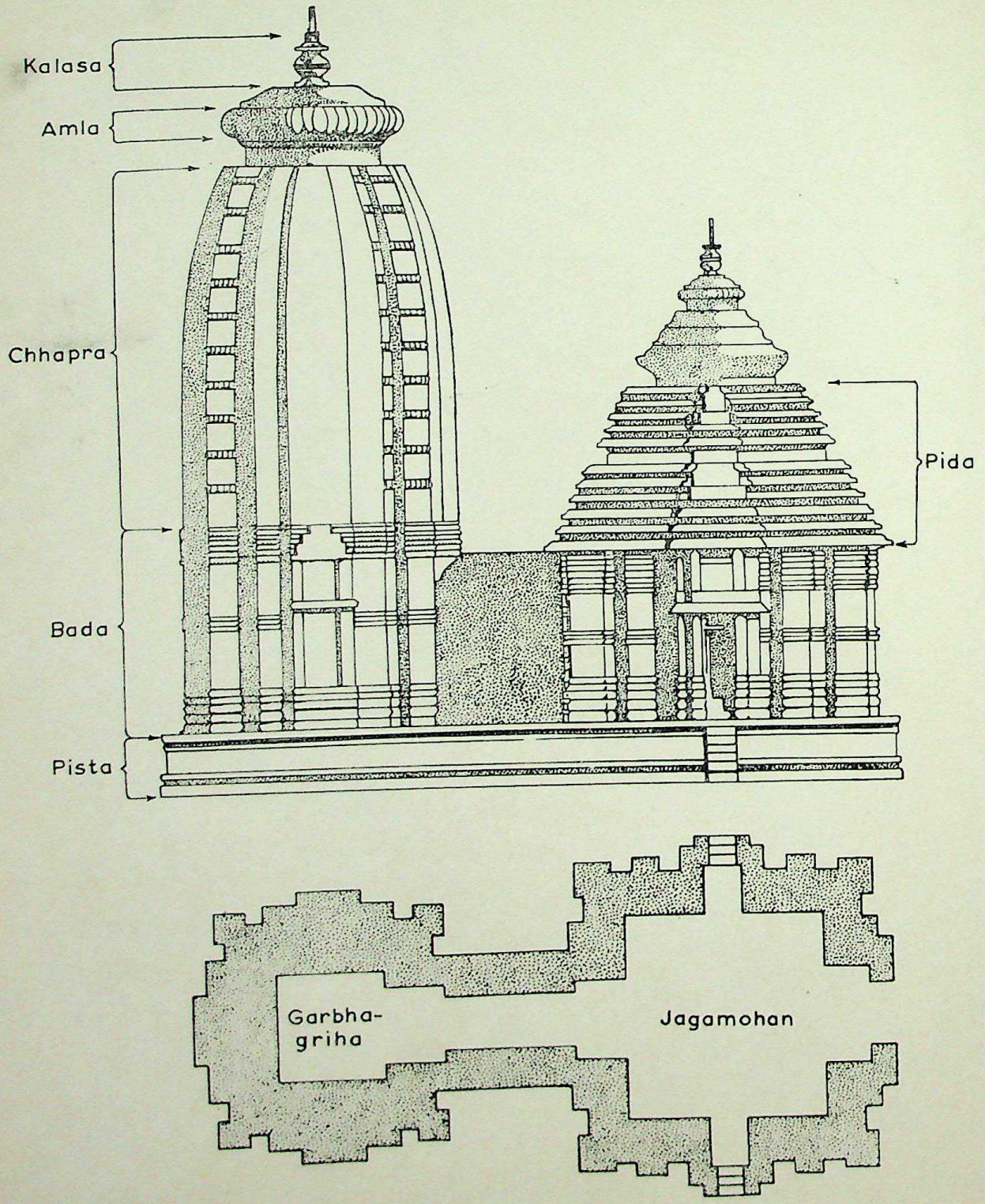

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NOTES & REFERENCES

CHAPTER I

Text page	*Note No.*	
1	1	Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, Quoted in *A History of Orissa P. 126.*
2	2	A. Stirling; An Account, Statistical & Historical of Orissa Proper, Konarak, 1825 pp. *164-176* (Quoted in O.C. Gangoli's Konarak)
2	3	James Fergusson; Picturesque illustrations of Ancient Architecture in Hindustan, London, 1948 (Quoted in O.C. Gangoli's Konarak). pp. 27-28.
2	4	W.W. Hunter; *A History of Orissa* Vol. I *p. 126*
2	5	John Marshall; Extract from a Conservation Note, dated 28th February (Quoted in O.C. Gangoli's Konarak)
2	6	Ananda Coomaraswamy; Four Days in Orissa, Modern Review, April, 1911, (see pp. 345-50) Quoted in O.C. Gangoli's Konarak.
2	7	Percy Brown; Indian Architecture, p. 125.
3	8	*ibid.*

CHAPTER II

9	1	See also p. 123, *A History of Orissa Vol. I.*
12	2	(No. missed in printing)
12	3	O.C. Gangoli's Konarak, p. 2 See p. 127 *A History of Orissa* Vol. I.

CHAPTER III

14	1	Abul Fazl; Ain-i-Akbari, Sir Jadu Nath Sircar, J.S. Jarret's Edition, Bib. Indica, Vol. II, (quoted in O.C. Gangoli's Konarak). pp. *140-141.*
14	2	A Stirling; (Quoted in Gangoli's Konarak)
14	3	W.W. Hunter; *A History of Orissa*, Vol I. p. 126
15	4	Ananda Coomaraswamy; *Four Days in Orissa*, Modern Review, April, 1911, pp. 345-350.
15	5	Stella Kramrisch; *Indian Sculpture*, (Heritage of India Series) pp. 113-14.

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CHAPTER III (Contd.)

Text page	*Note No.*	
15	6	Percy Brown; *Indian Architecture*; p. 125
15	7	S.K. Saraswati; *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 551.
15	8	Benjamin Rowland; *The Art & Architecture of India*, pp. 162-63.
15	9	O.C. Gangoli's Konarak; pp. 1-2.
15	10	Robert Ebersole; *Black Pagoda*, p. 64.
15	11	N.K. Sahu; *History of Orissa*, Vol. I. p. 3.
16	12	A Stirling; (Quoted in Gangoli's Konarak)
16	13	R. Mitra; *The Aniiquities of Orissa*, Vol. I. p. 250.
17	14	James Fergusson; History of Indian & Eastern Architecture; pp. 426-27.
18	15	Stella Kramrisch; *The Art of India Through the Ages* p. 44.
18	16	H.C. Ray; *Dynastic History of Northern India*, pp. 447-48.
20	17	*ibid* p. 449
20	18	*ibid* p. 478
21	19	*ibid* p. 482
21	20	N.K. Sahu; *History of Orissa*, Vol. I p. 4
22	21	K.C. Panigrahi; The Temple of the Sun at Konarak, Orissa Review, 1949. pp. 26-27.
23	22	See story given on page 12, Chapter II.
23	23	Stella Kramrisch; *The art of India Through the Ages*,p. 43.
24	24	W.W. Hunter; *History of Orissa*, Vol. I. pp. 126, 132, 133.

CHAPTER IV

26	1	K.C. Panigrahi—The Temple of the Sun at Konarak; Orissa Review (Orissa Monuments Special) pp. 26-27.
27	2	Verse quoted by N.K. Bose, *Canons of Orissan Architecture*, p. 49
29	3	This is one indication of the need for a thorough study of the temples of Bhubaneswar for understanding Konarak's temple.
30	4	Byron; She Walks in Beauty, lines 8-9.
31	5	N.K. Bose; *Canons of Orissan Architecture.*
31	6	S.K. Saraswati; The Struggle for Empire, p. 544.
31	7	*ibid* pp. 542-43
32	8	*ibid* p. 543
33	9	Percy Brown; Indian Architecture, p. 127
34	10	S.K. Saraswati; Struggle for Empire, pp. 551-52.

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CHAPTER IV (Contd.)

Text page	*Note No.*	
35	11	James Fergusson; *History of Indian & Eastern Architecture,* pp. 427-428.
35	12	S.K. Saraswati *The Struggle for Empire,* pp. 553-54.
36	13	W.W. Hunter; *History of Orissa,* Vol. I, pp. 131, 132.
37	14	James Fergusson; *History of Indian & Eastern Architecture,* p. 428.

CHAPTER V

39	1	A. Stirling; (Quoted in O.C. Gangoli's Konarak)
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39	3	Stella Kramrisch; *The Art of India.* p. 44.
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40	5	Ananda Coomaraswamy; Four Days in Orissa, Modern Review, April, 1911, pp. 345-50 (Quoted in Gangoly's Konarak).
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40	8	Roger Fry; Oriental Art, Quartely Review, No. 422 January, 1910, pp. 235-36.
40	9	Ananda Coomaraswamy; Four Days in Orissa; Modern Review; April, 1911. pp. 235-36.
40	10	Mano Mohan Ganguly; *Orissa and Her Remains:; Ancient and Medieval.* pp. 204-5.
42	11	Ananda Coomaraswamy; *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon,* p. 75.
47	12	Deva Prasad Ghose; *Designs from Orissan Temples.*
47	13	*ibid.*
47	14	*ibid.*
49	15	A. Stirling's (Quoted in O.C. Gangoli; Konarak)
49	16	From the *Shilp Prakash* of Ramchandar Mahapatr in the possession of Pandit Sadashiv Nath of the Raghunandan Library, Puri.

CHAPTER VI

51	1	Deva Prasad Ghose; *Designs from Orissan Temples.*
52	2	R.Mitra; *The Antiquities of Orissa,* p. 208.
52	3	Fouchet, *Erotic Sculpture of India*; p. 63.

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Text page	*Note No.*	
52	4	*Hymns of the Rigveda;* Translated by Ralph T.H. Griffith; Vol. I pp. 67.68.
53	5	*Hymns of the Rigveda;* Translated by Ralph T.H. Griffith; Vol. I pp. 153.
53	6	S.K. Saraswati; *The Struggle for Empire.* p. 552.
56	7	V.S. Aggarwala; *Thousand Syllabled Speech* (I-Vision in Long Darkness) pp. 51-52.
56	8	*Vatsyayana's Kama Sutra;* Edited by W.G. Archer.
57	9	William Shakespeare; *King Lear,* Act IV, Sc. VII, lines 44-48.
57	10	Henry Vaughan; *The World*; lines 1-7.

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59	1	Percy Brown; *Indian Architecture,* pp. 126-27.
59	2	*ibid.*
60	3	Benjamin Rowland; *The Art and Architecture of India,* pp. 162-63.
60	4	Robert Ebersole; *Black Pagoda,* p. 87.
62	5	K.M. Panikkar; Introduction to the *Kama-Sutra of Vatsyayana* pp. 74.75.
63	6	Ananda Coomaraswamy; *Four Days in Orissa,* Modern Review, April, 1911. pp. 345-50.
65	7	Stella Kramrisch; Her entire essay is a most lucid exposition of this theme.
65	8	Shashibhushan Dasgupta; *Obscure Religious Cults;* pp. 115-16.

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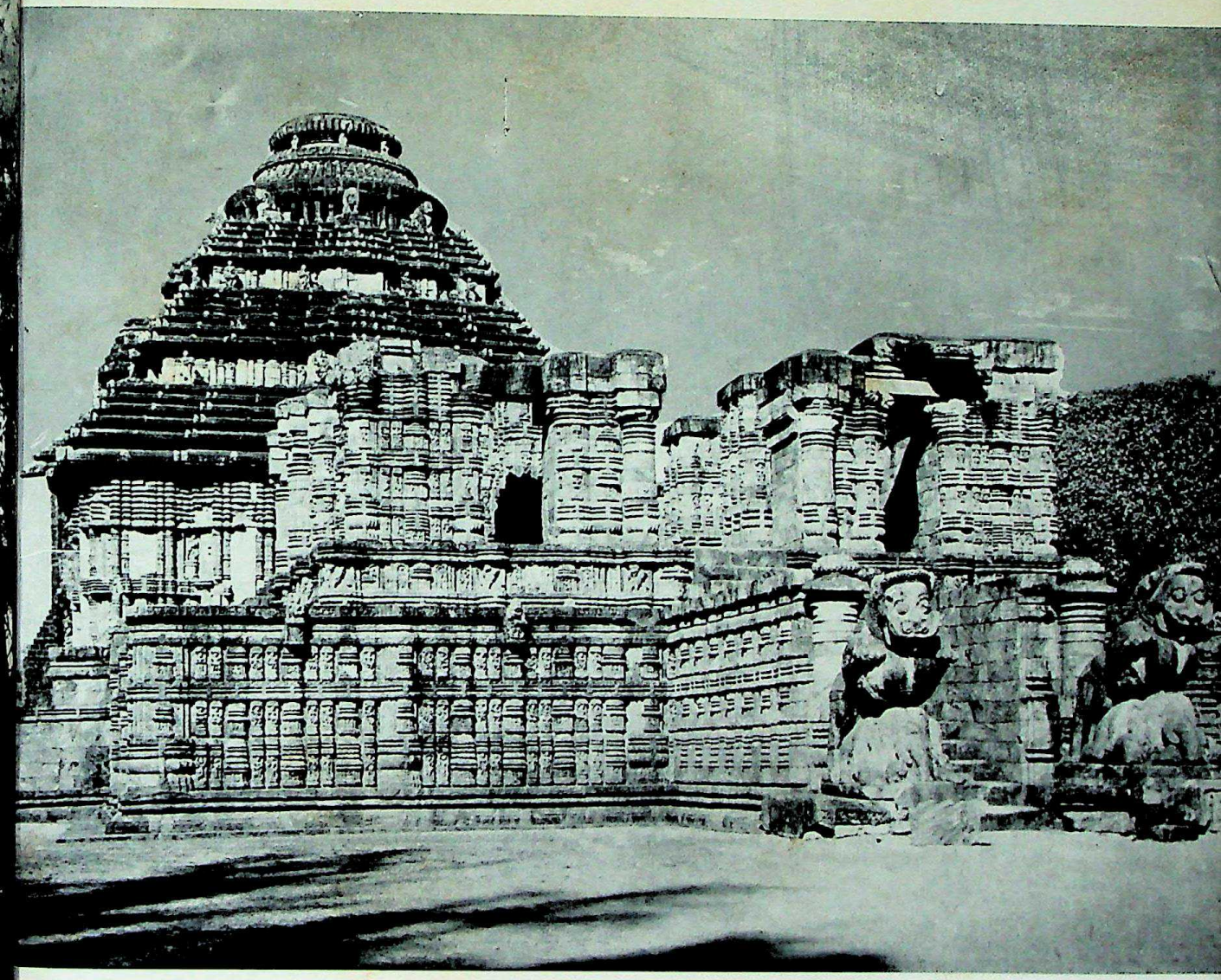

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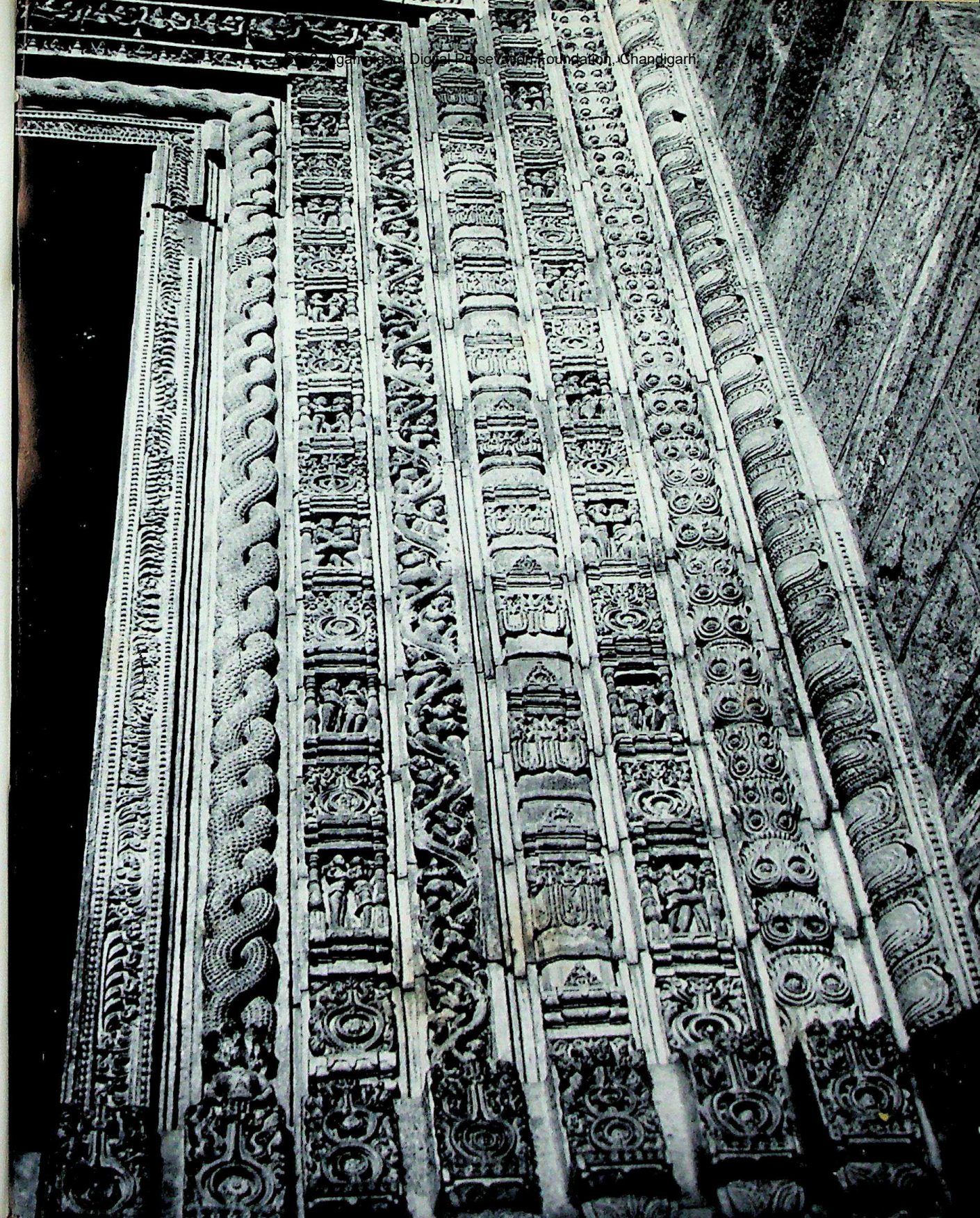

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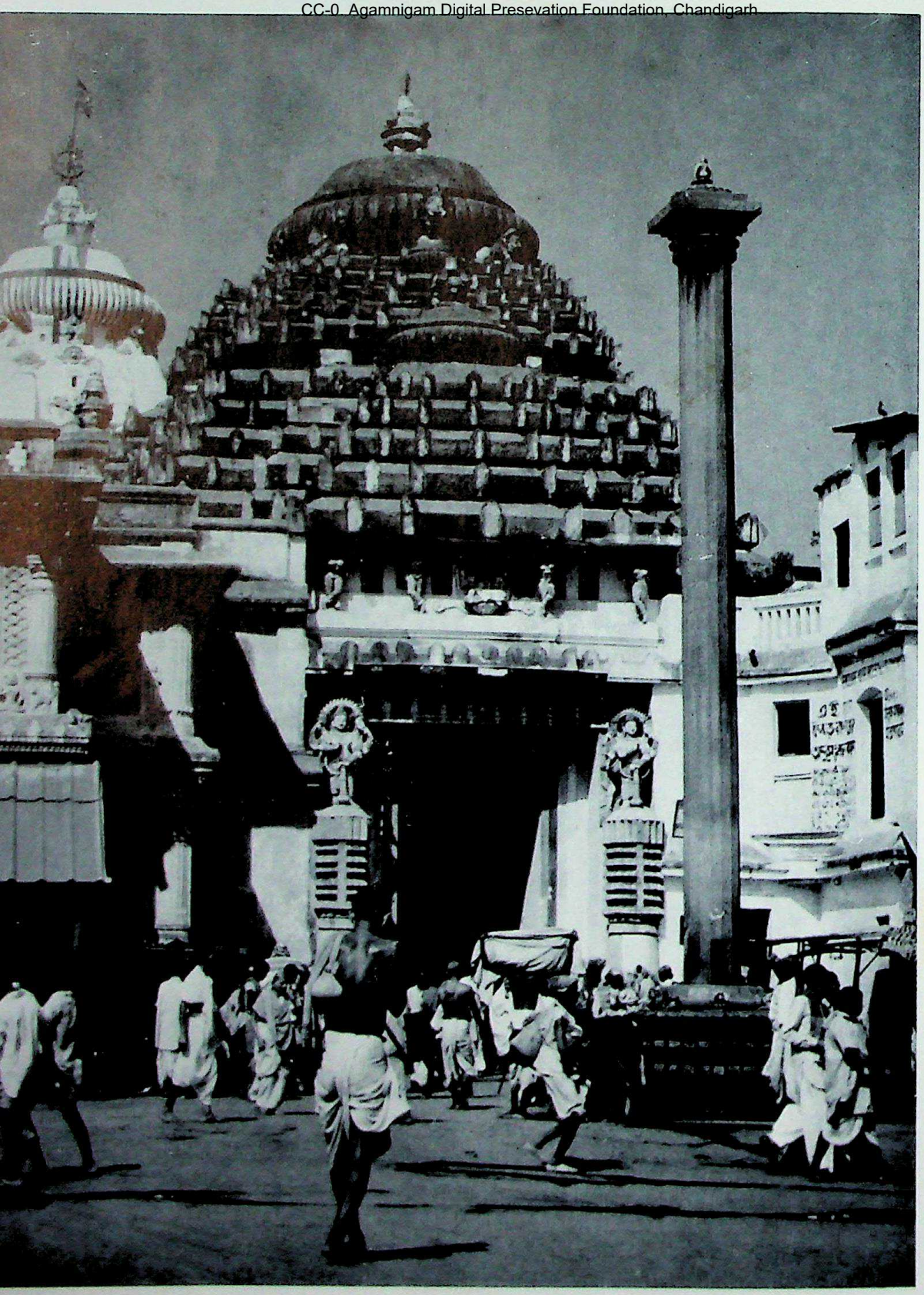

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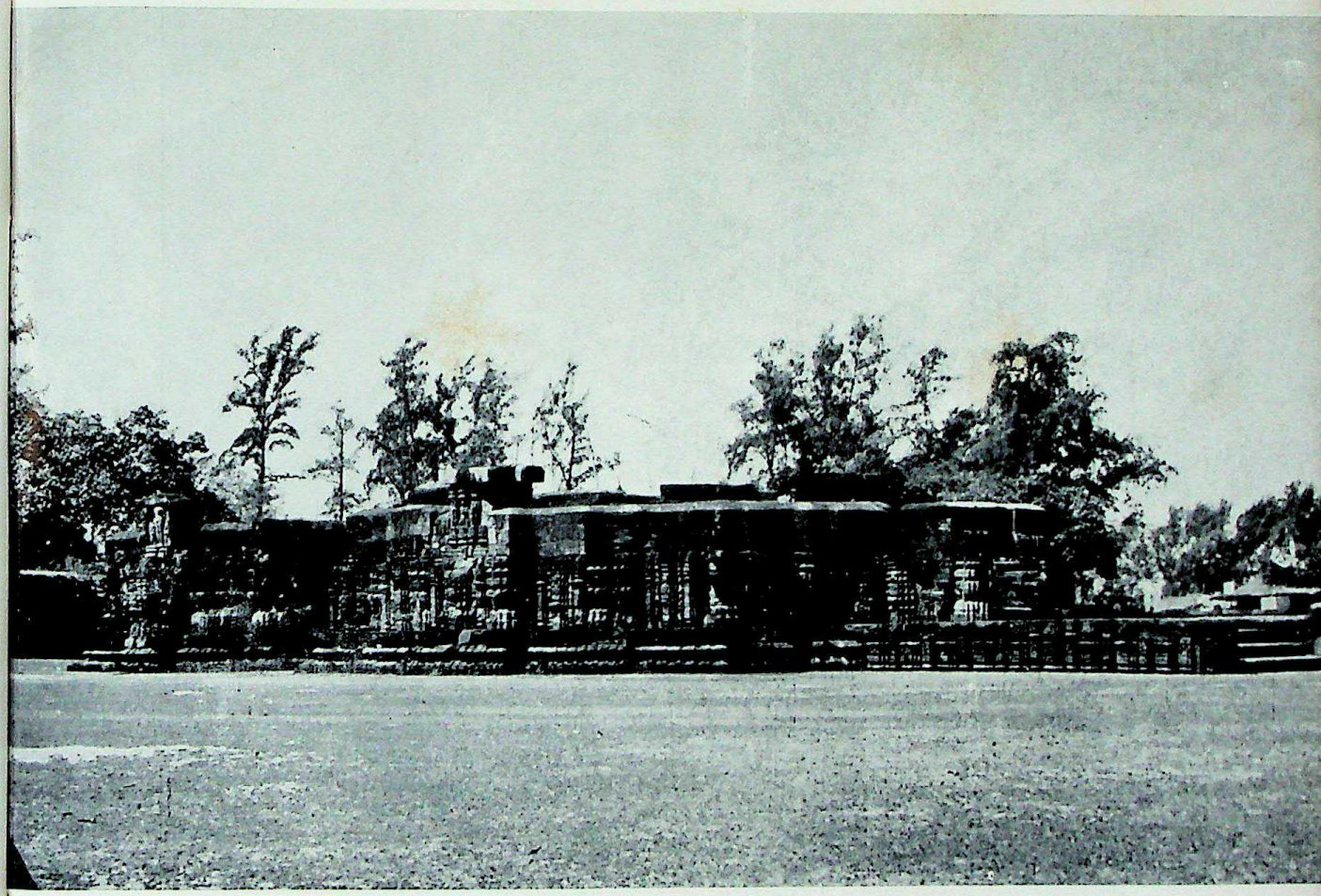

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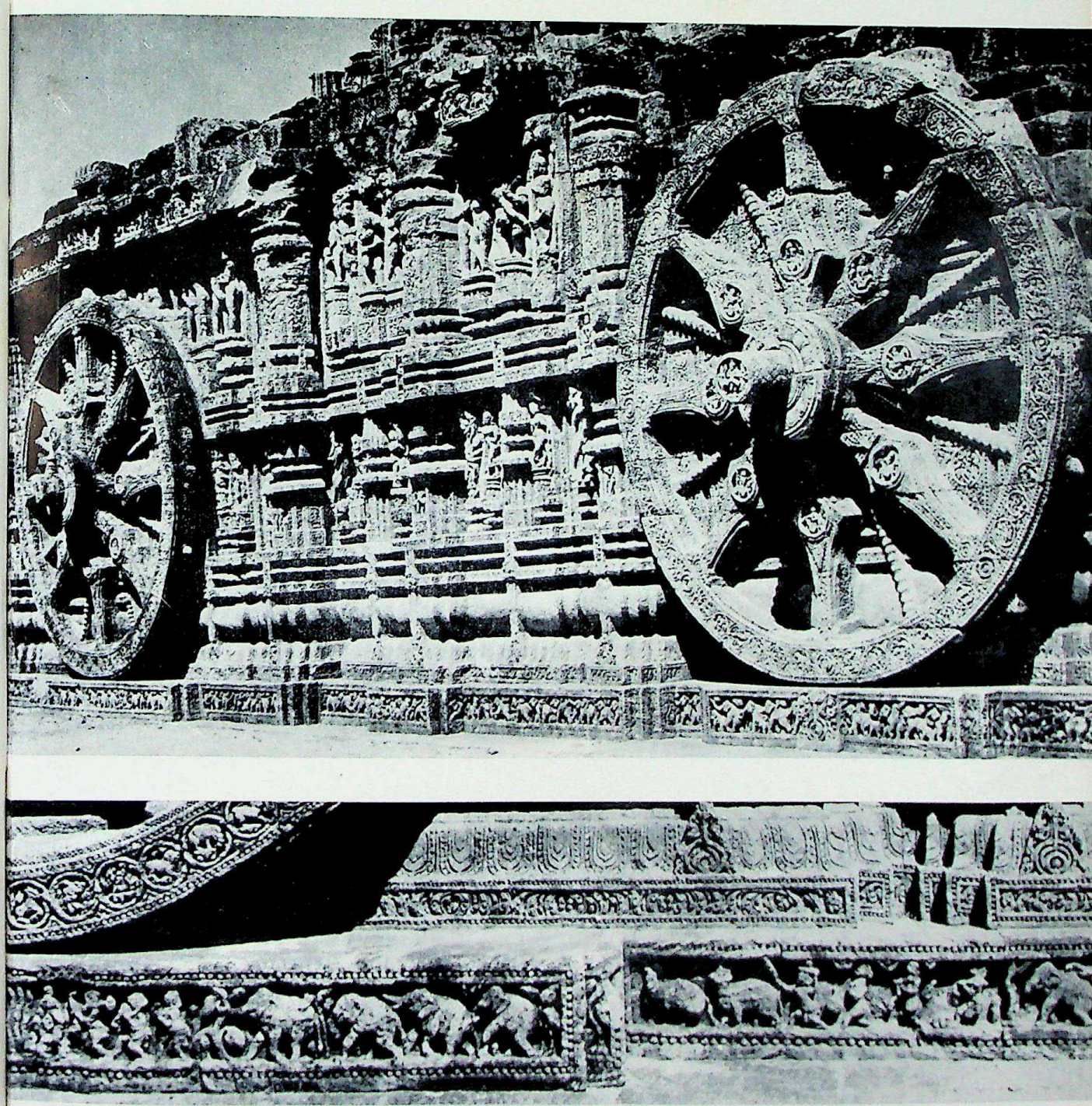

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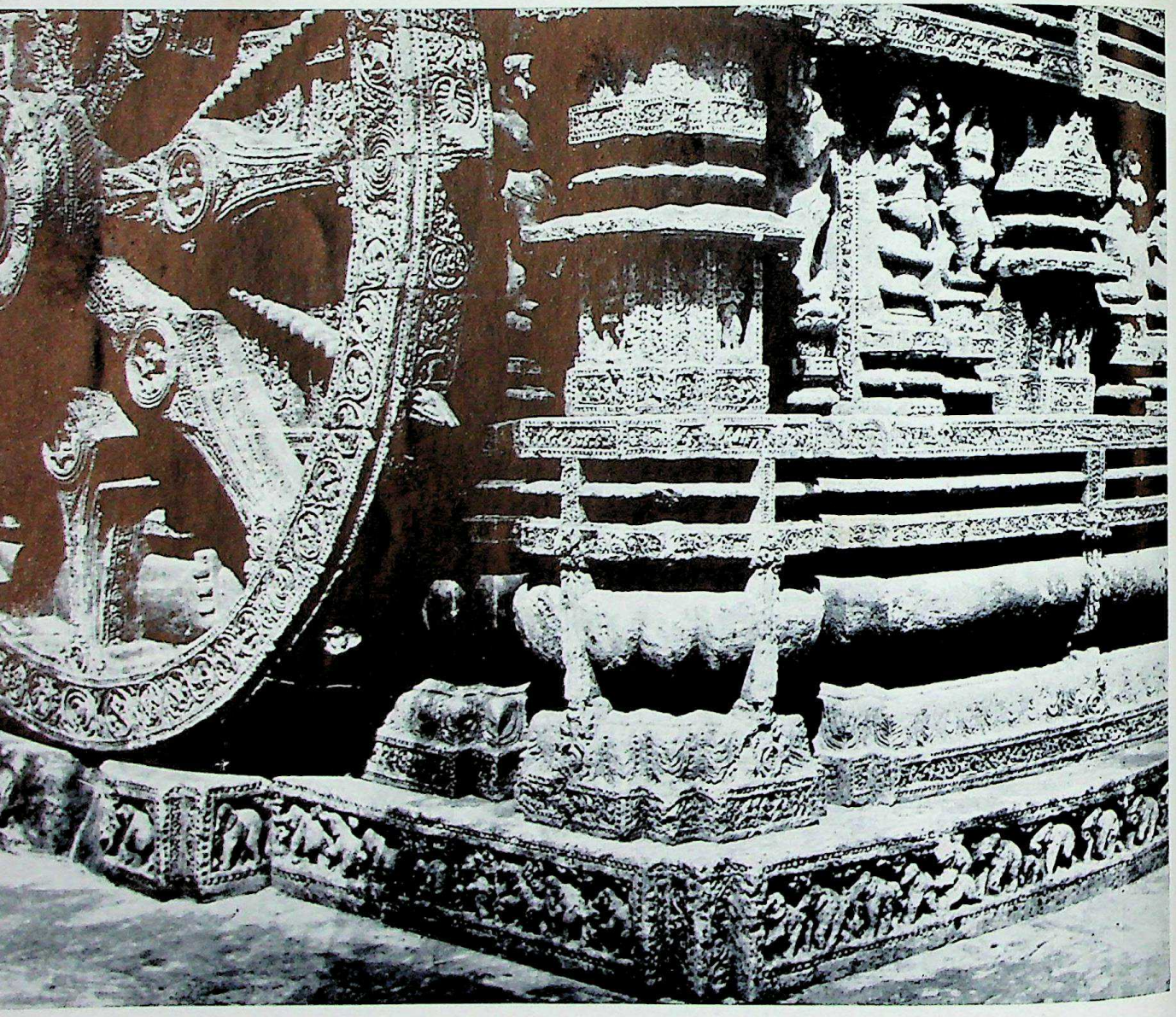

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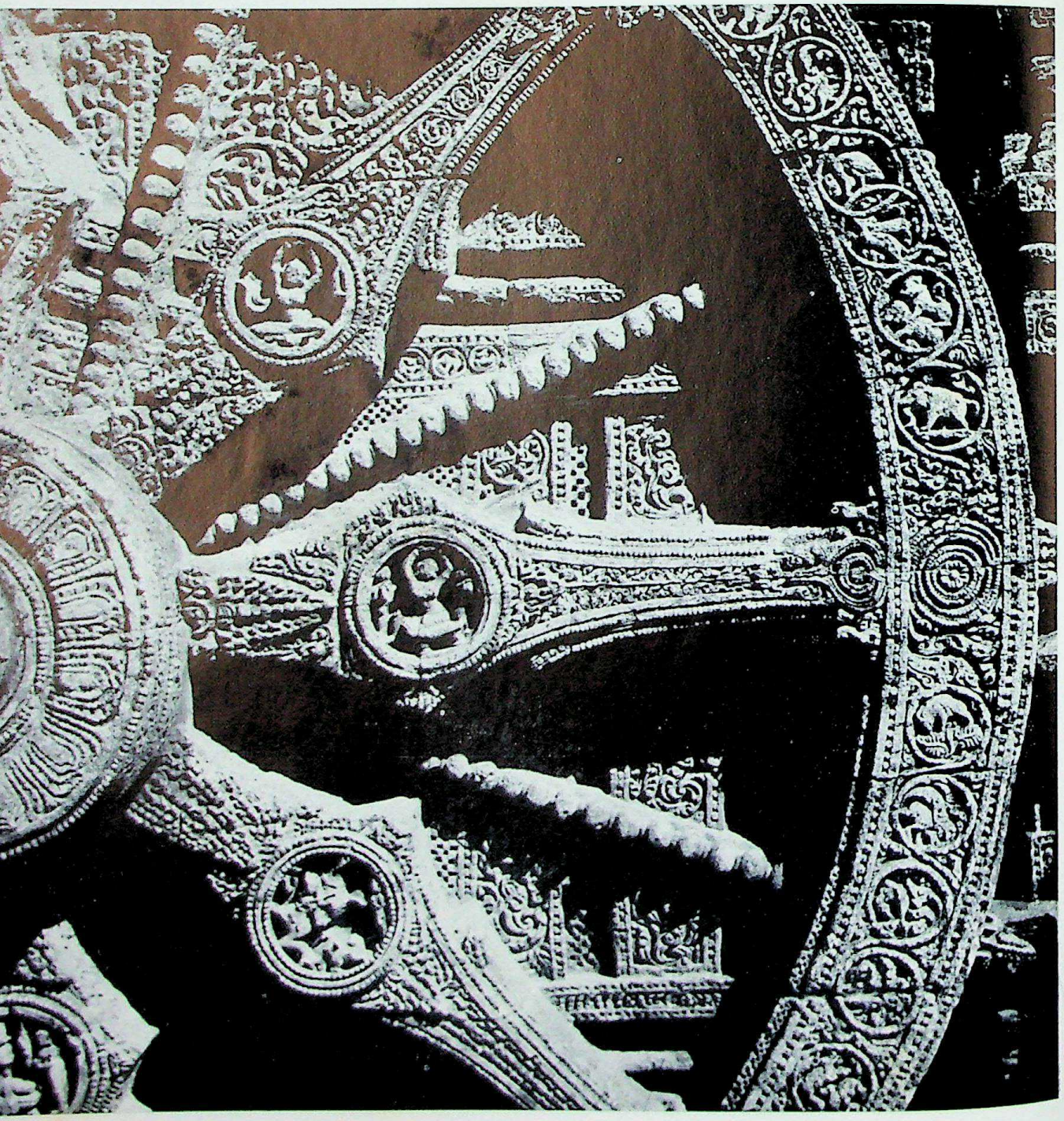

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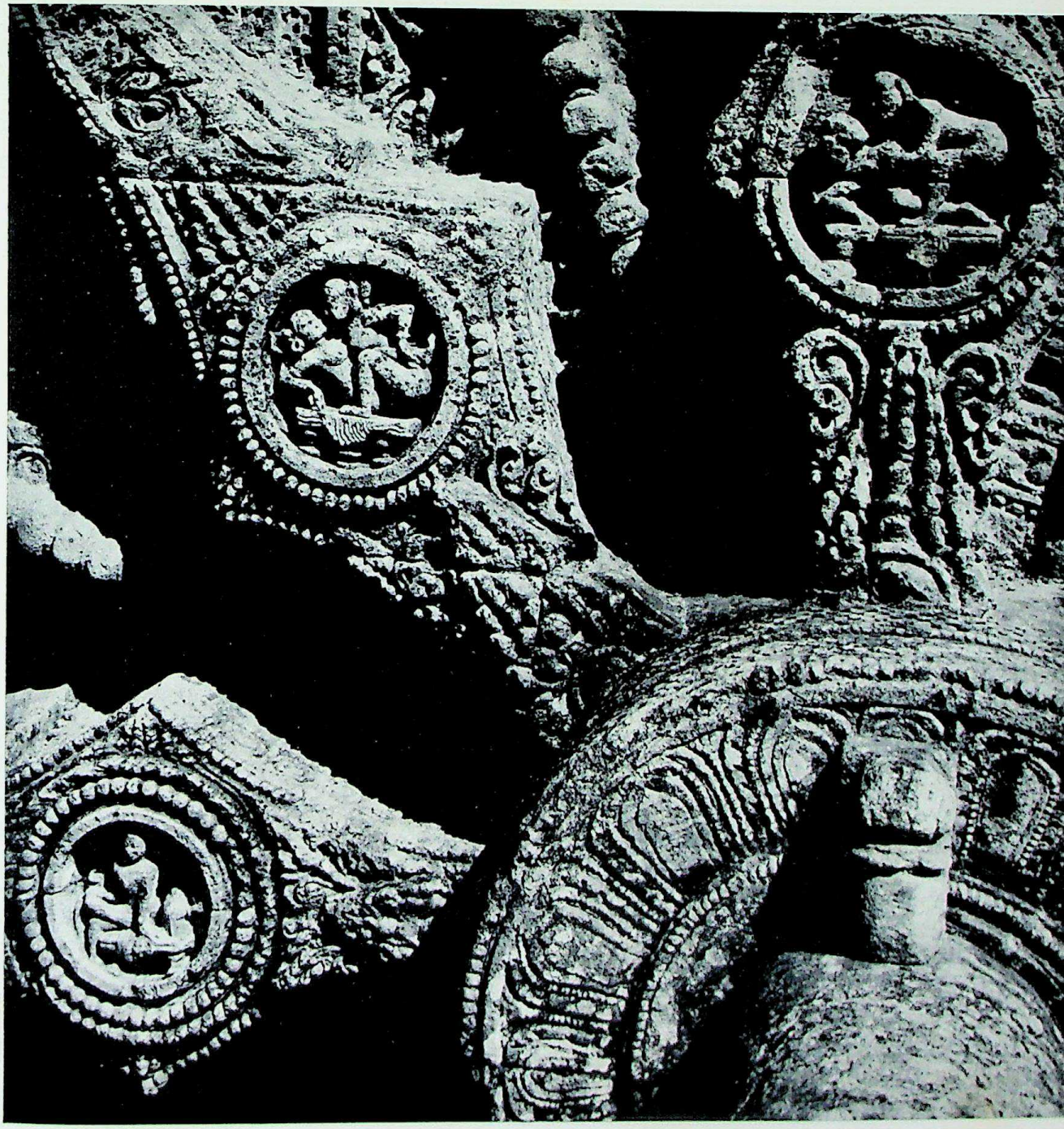

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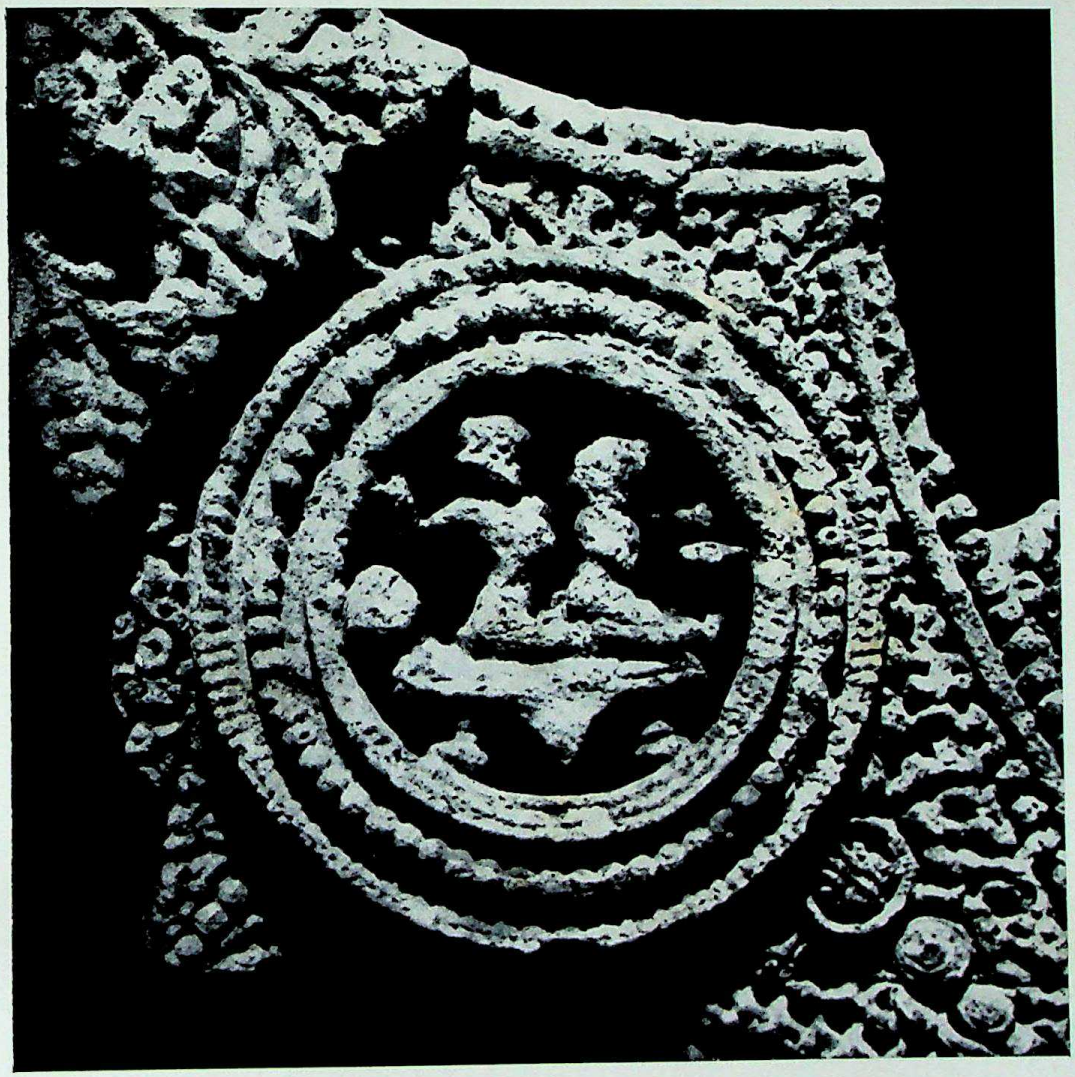

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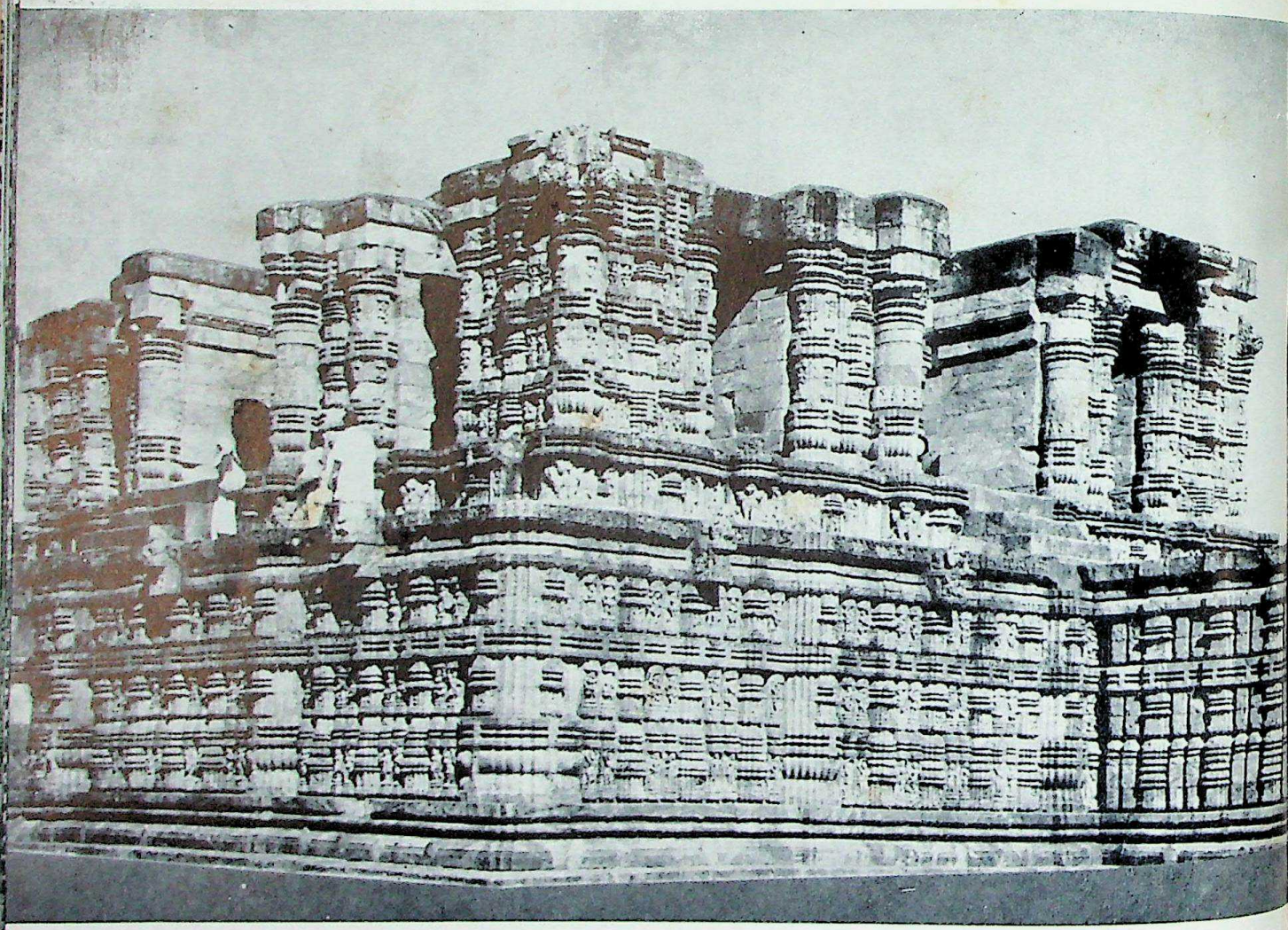

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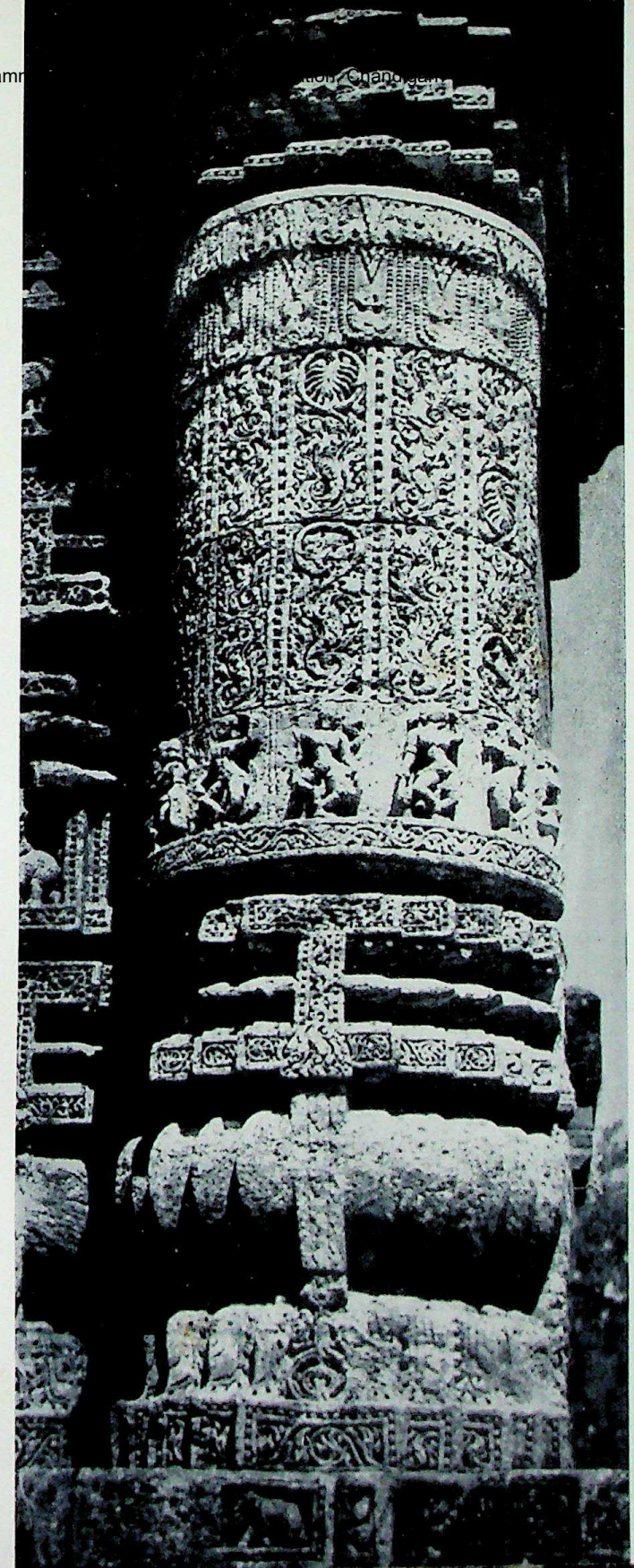

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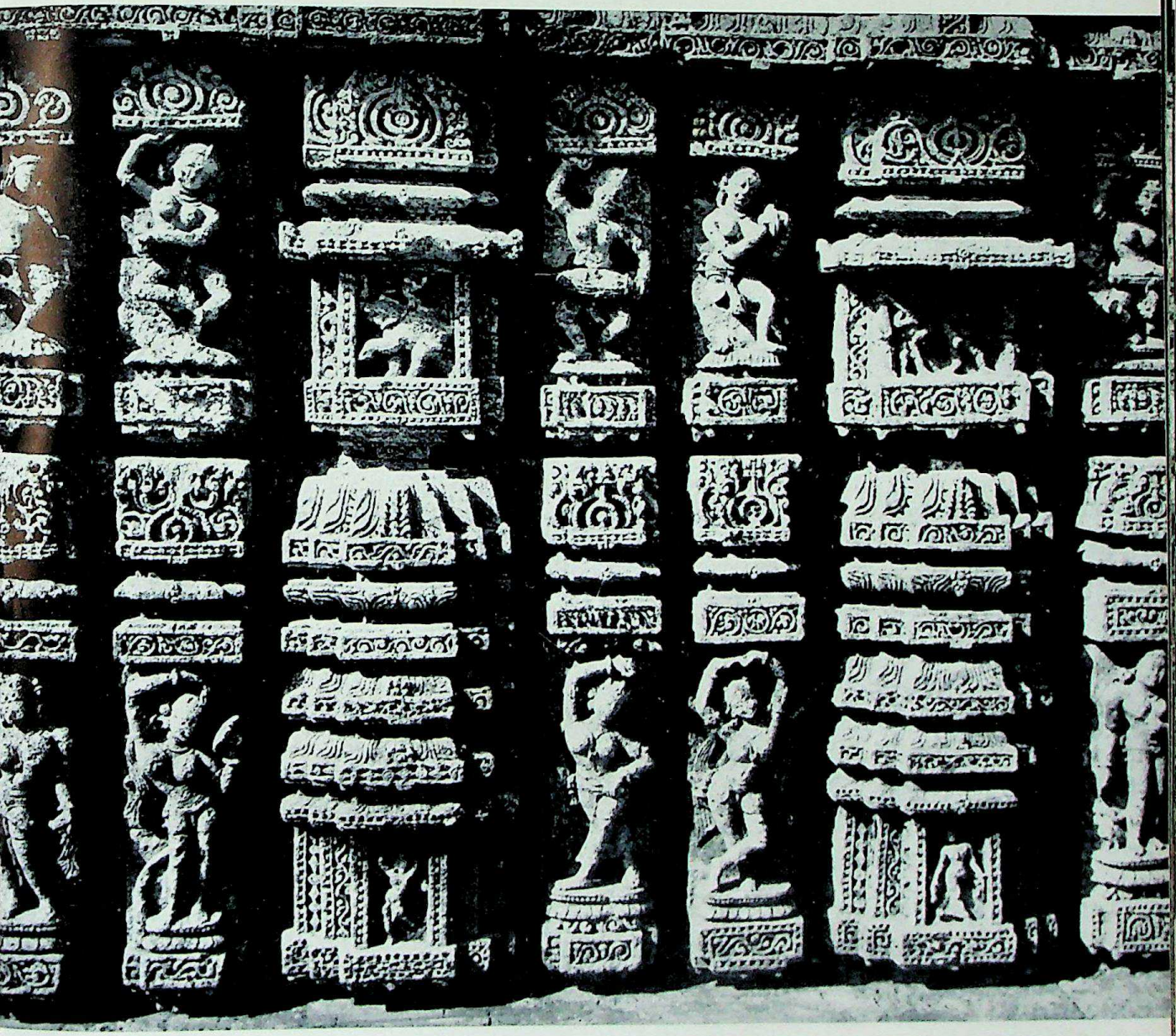

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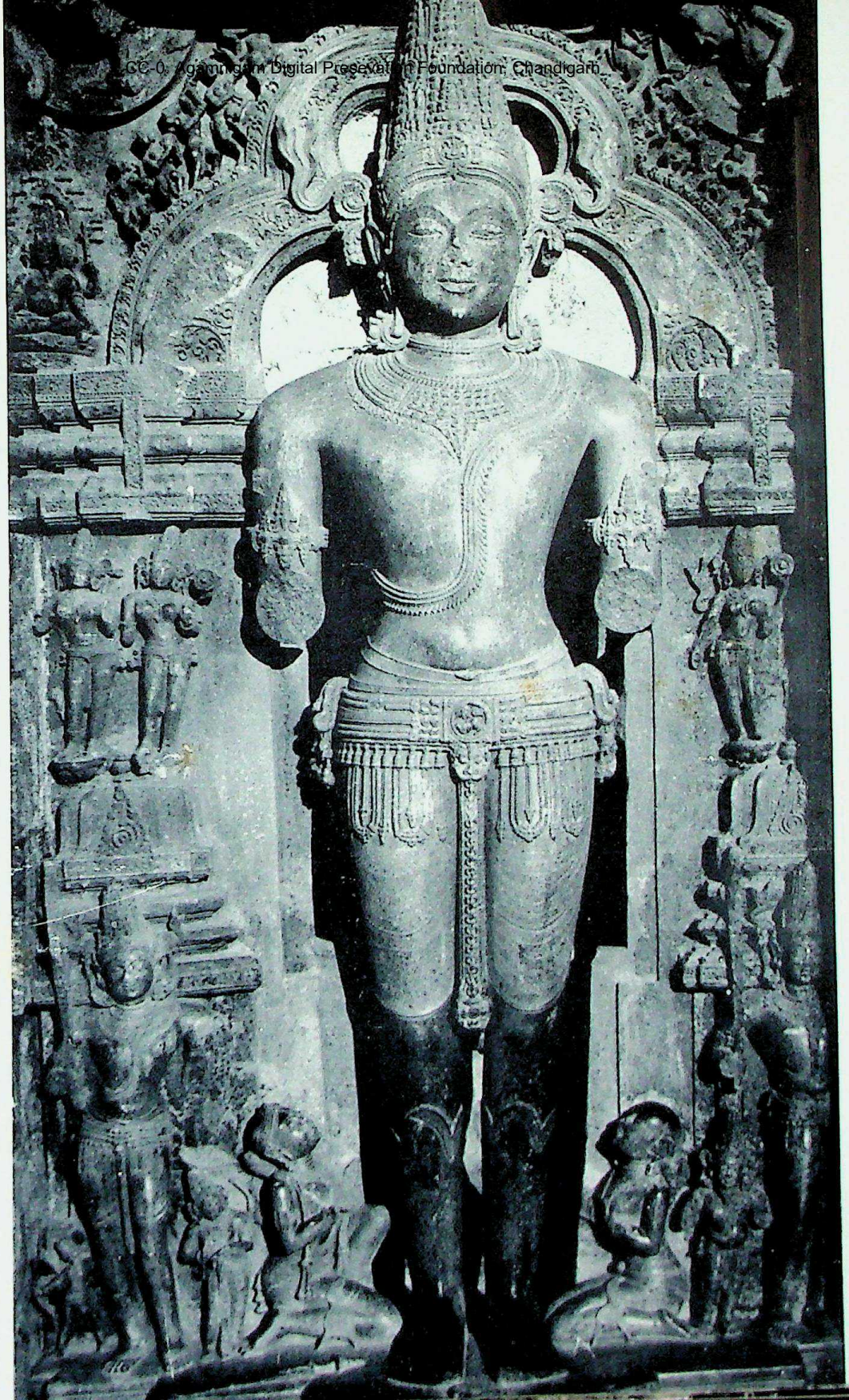

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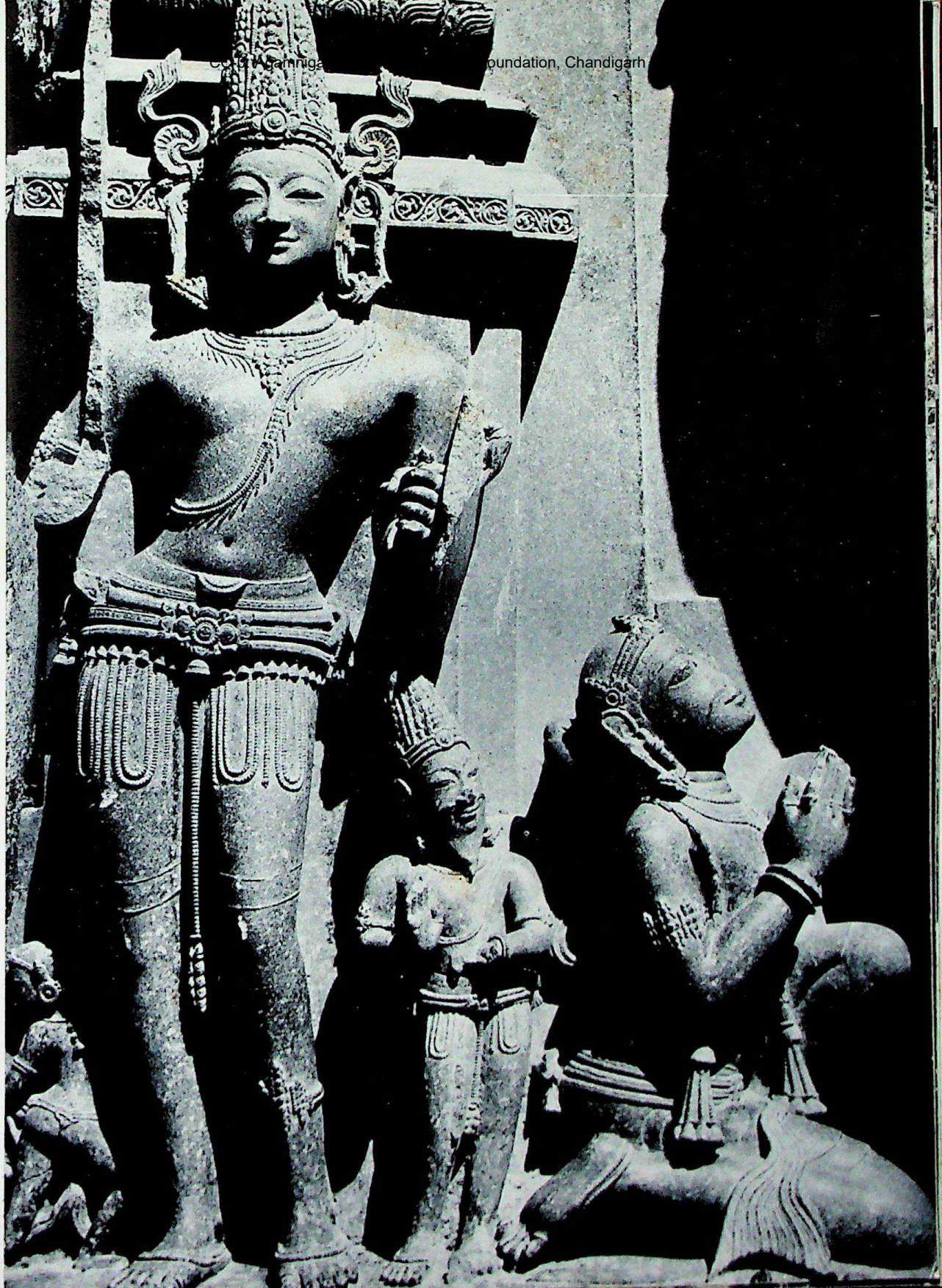

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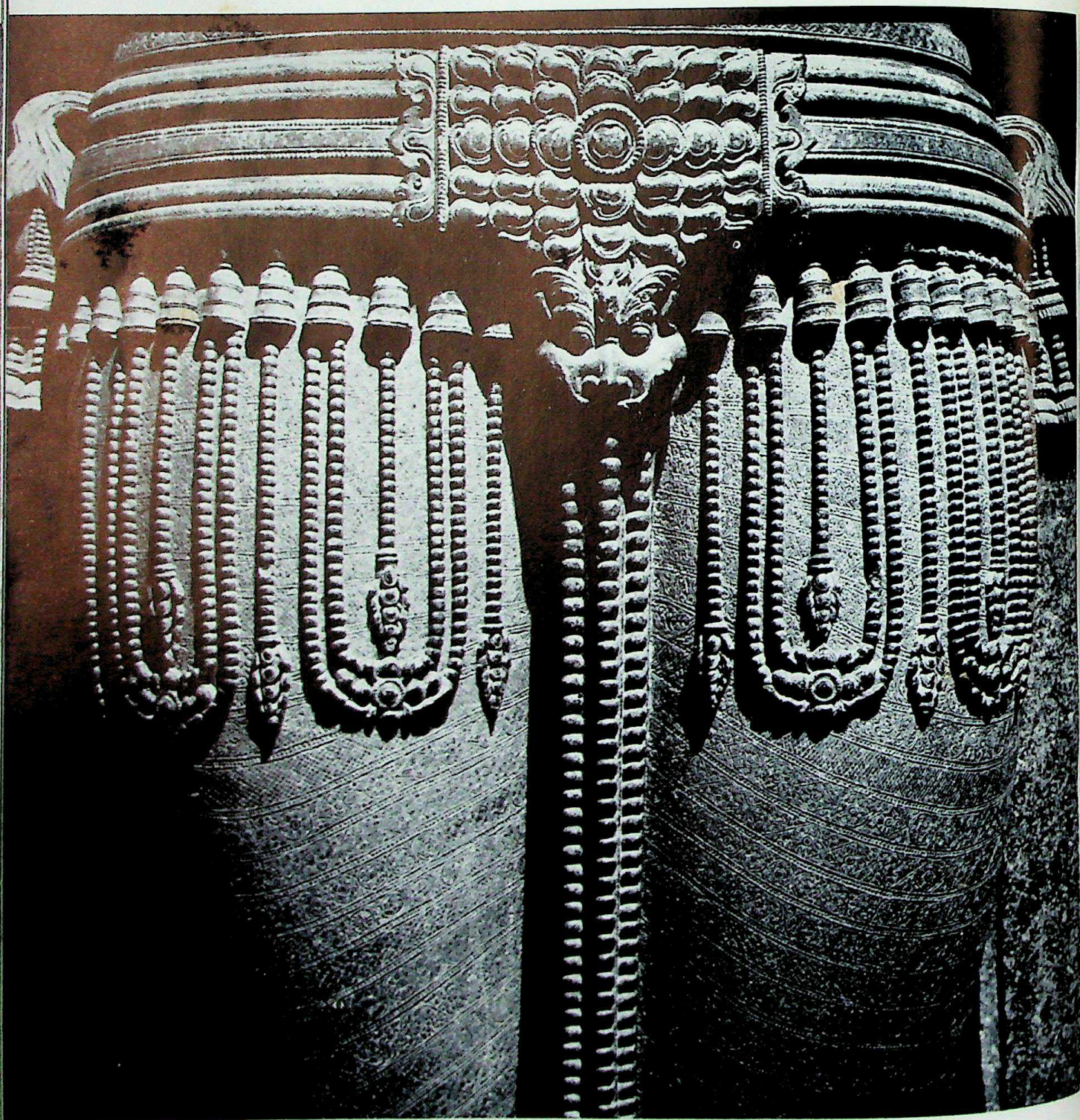

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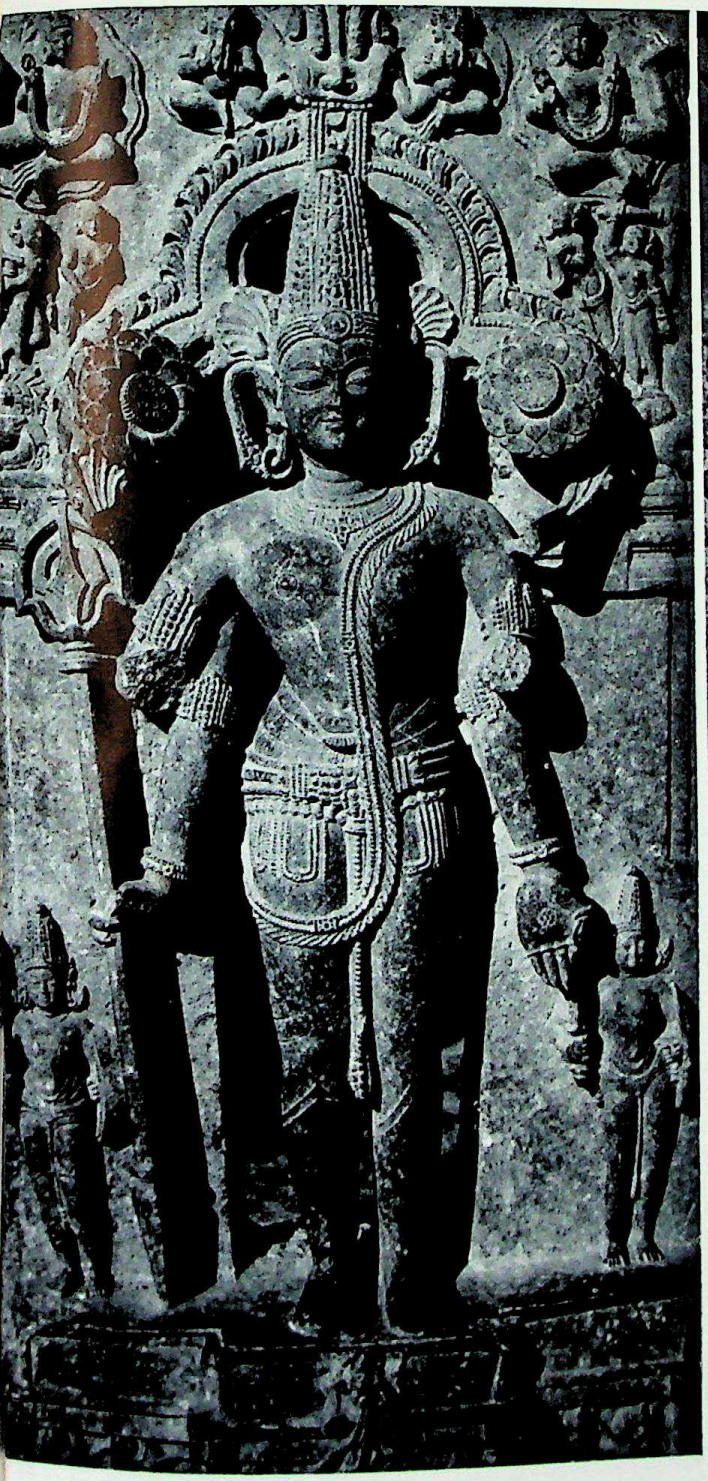

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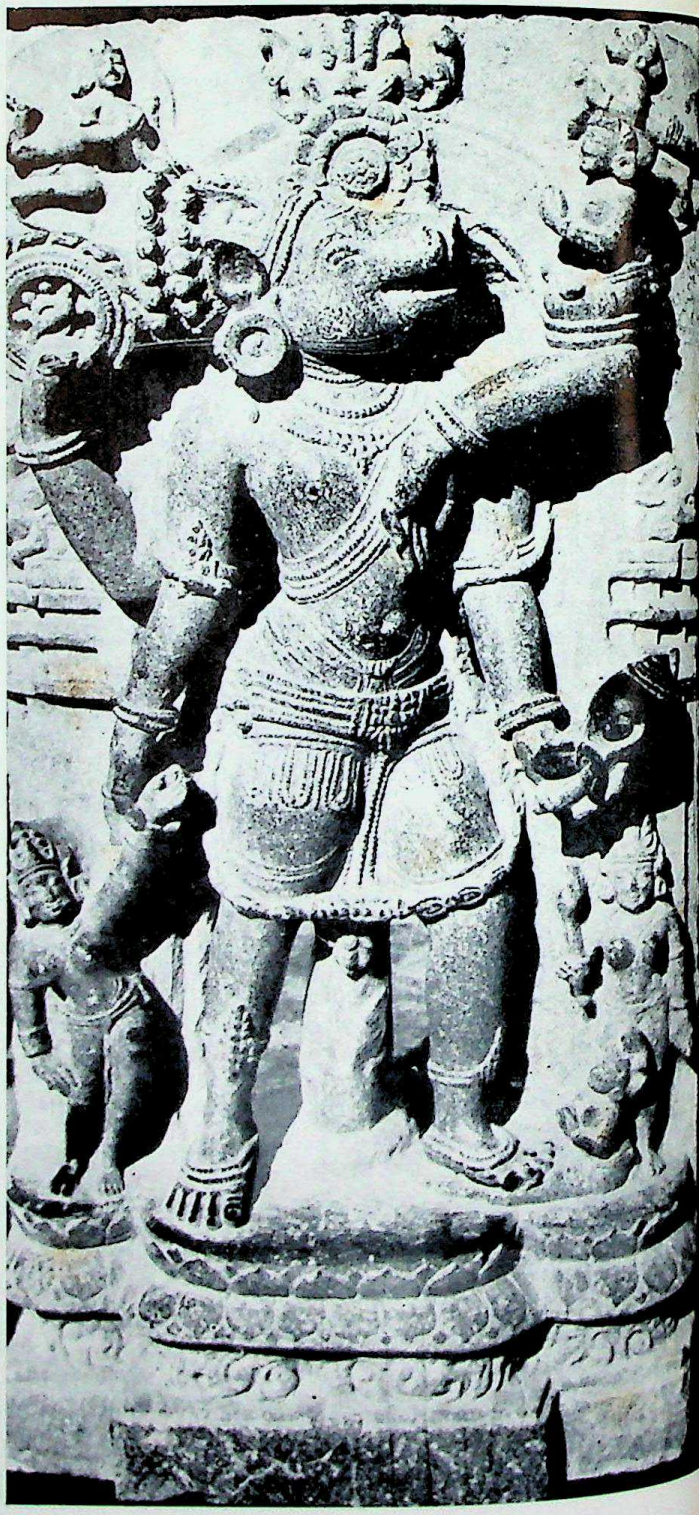

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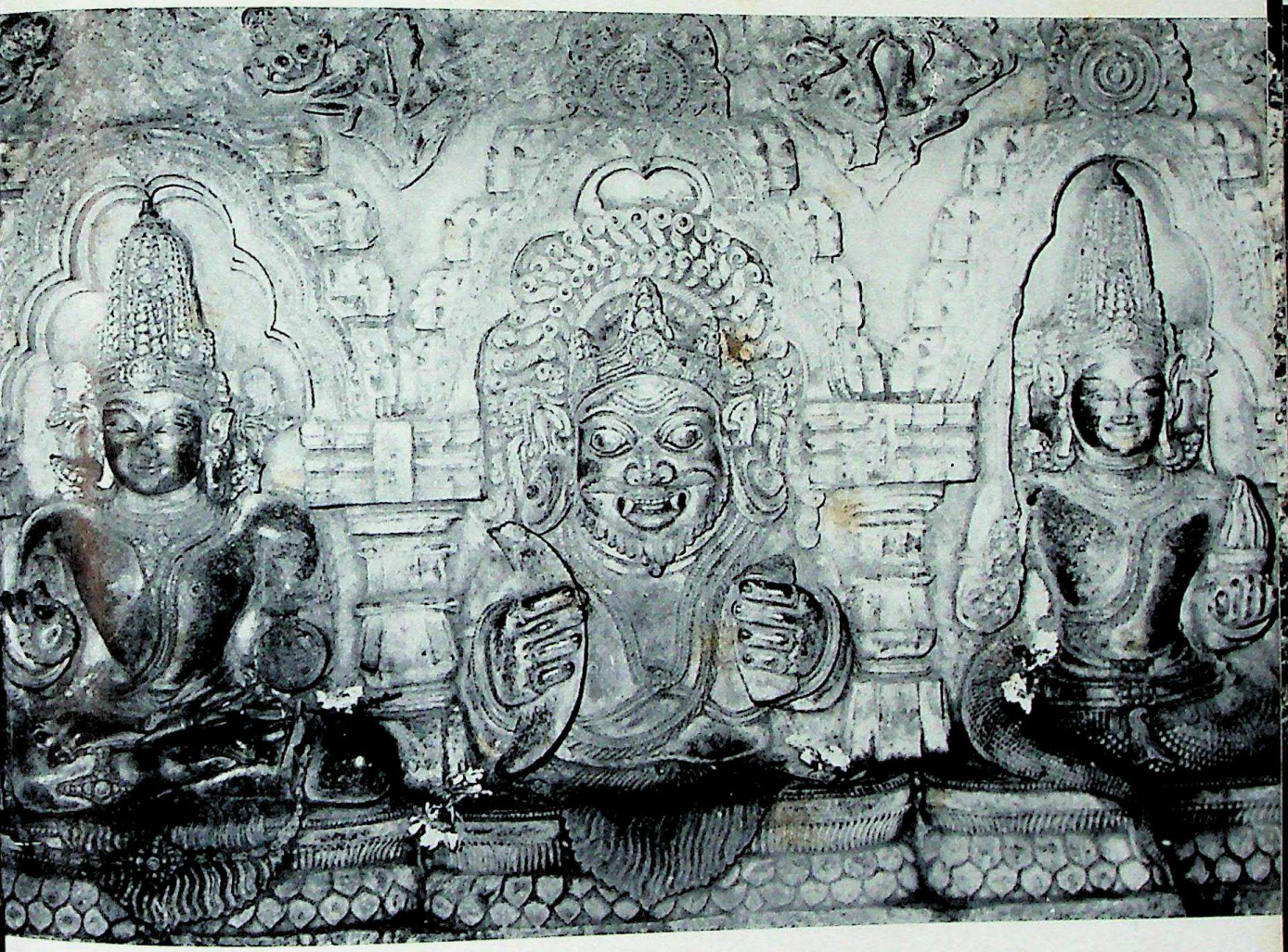

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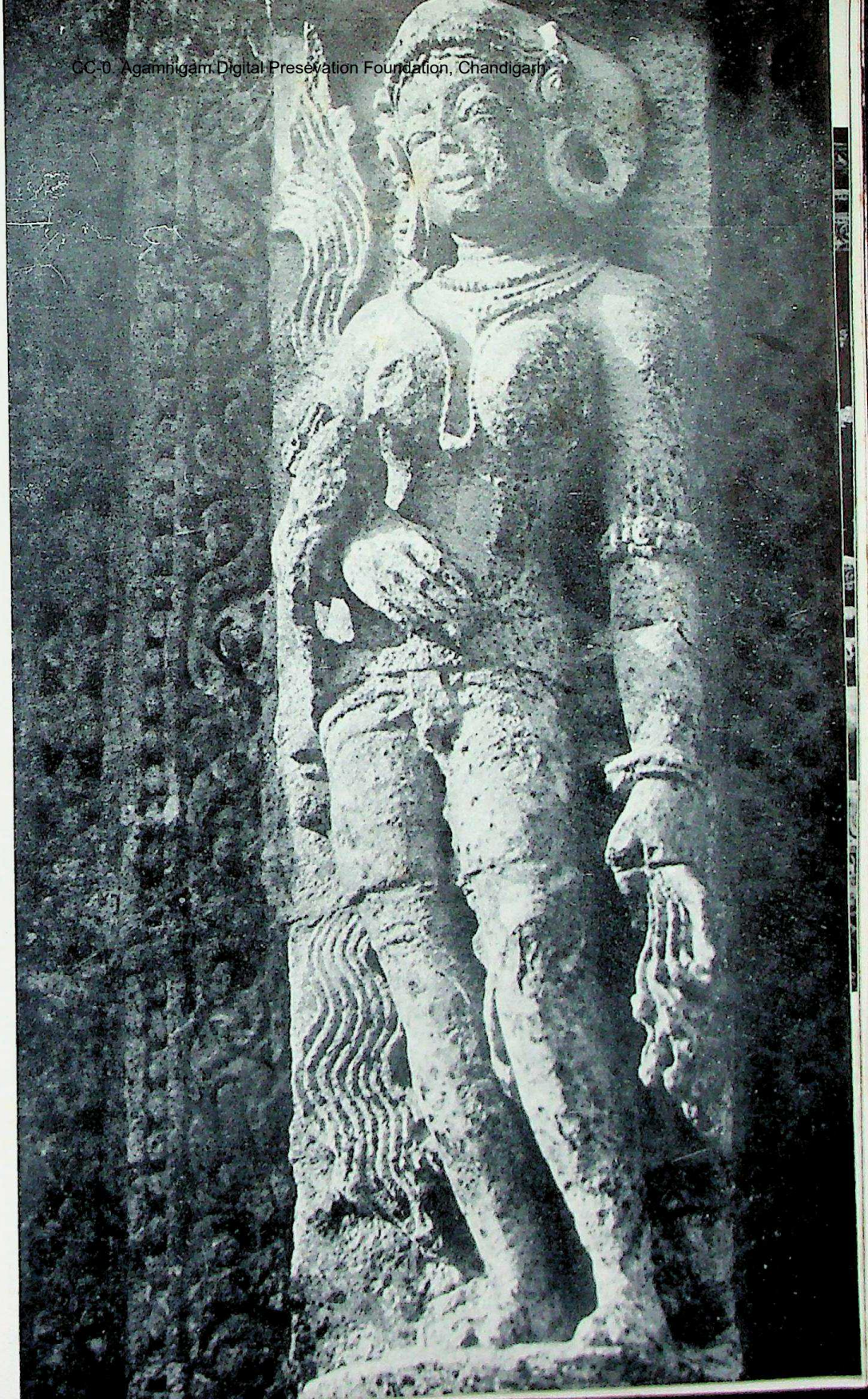

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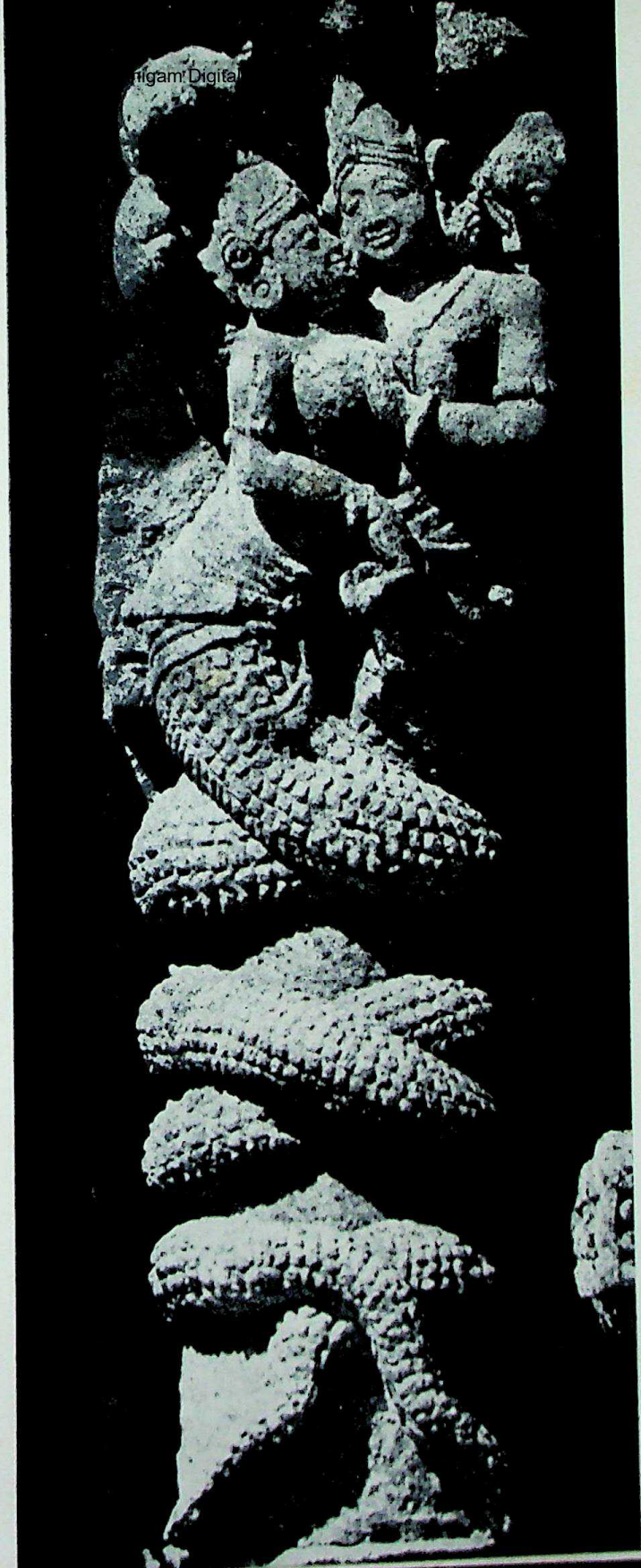

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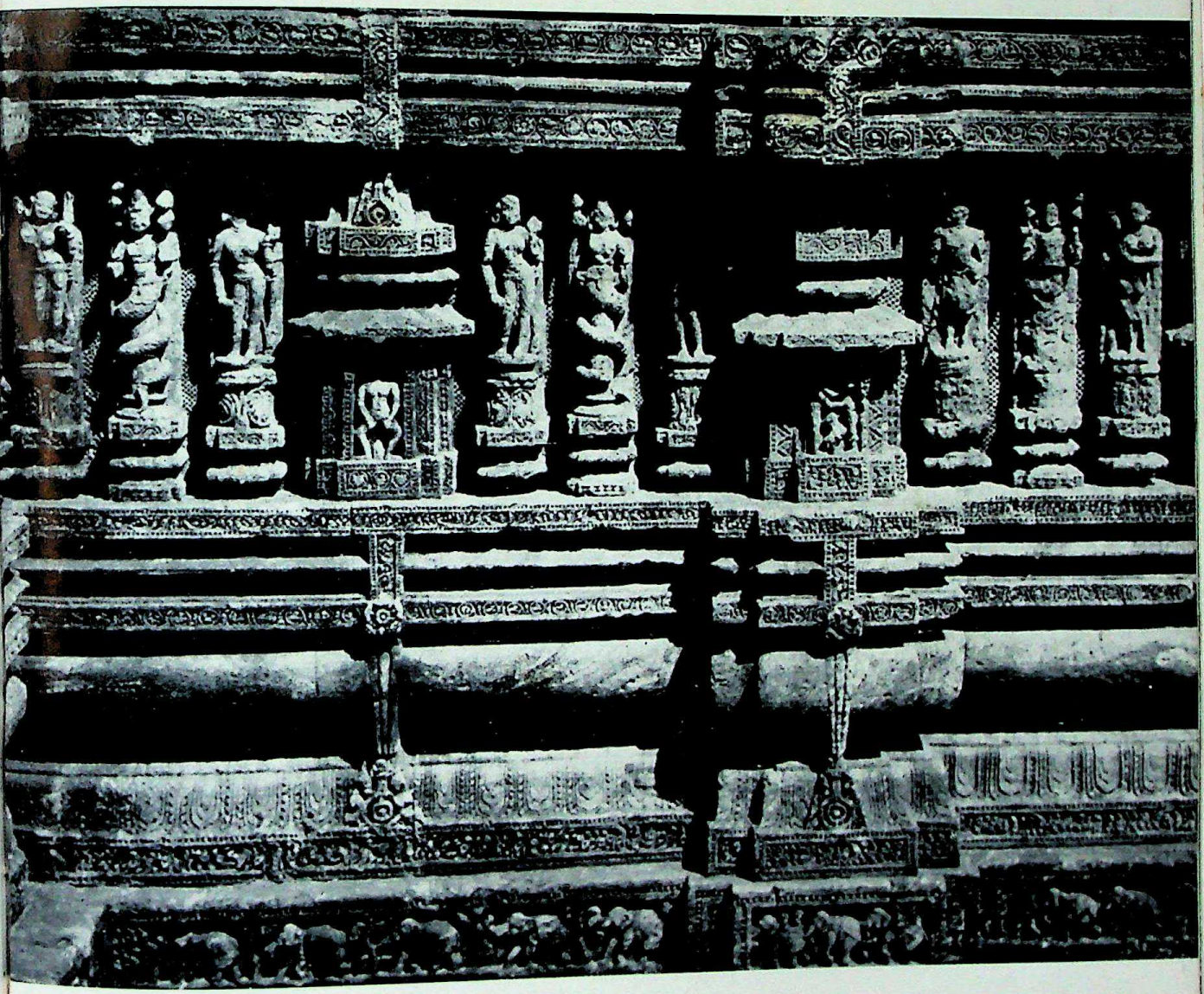

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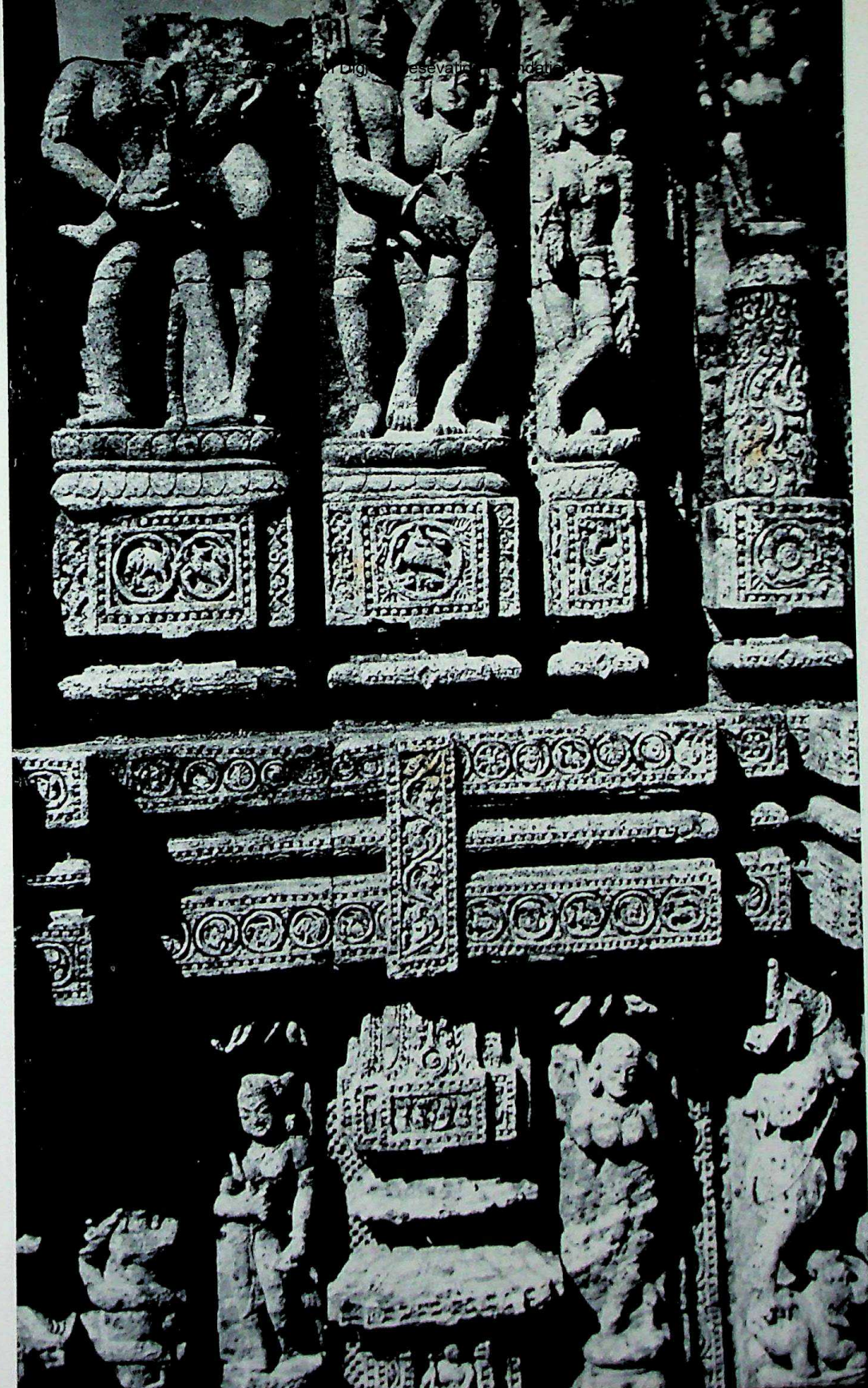

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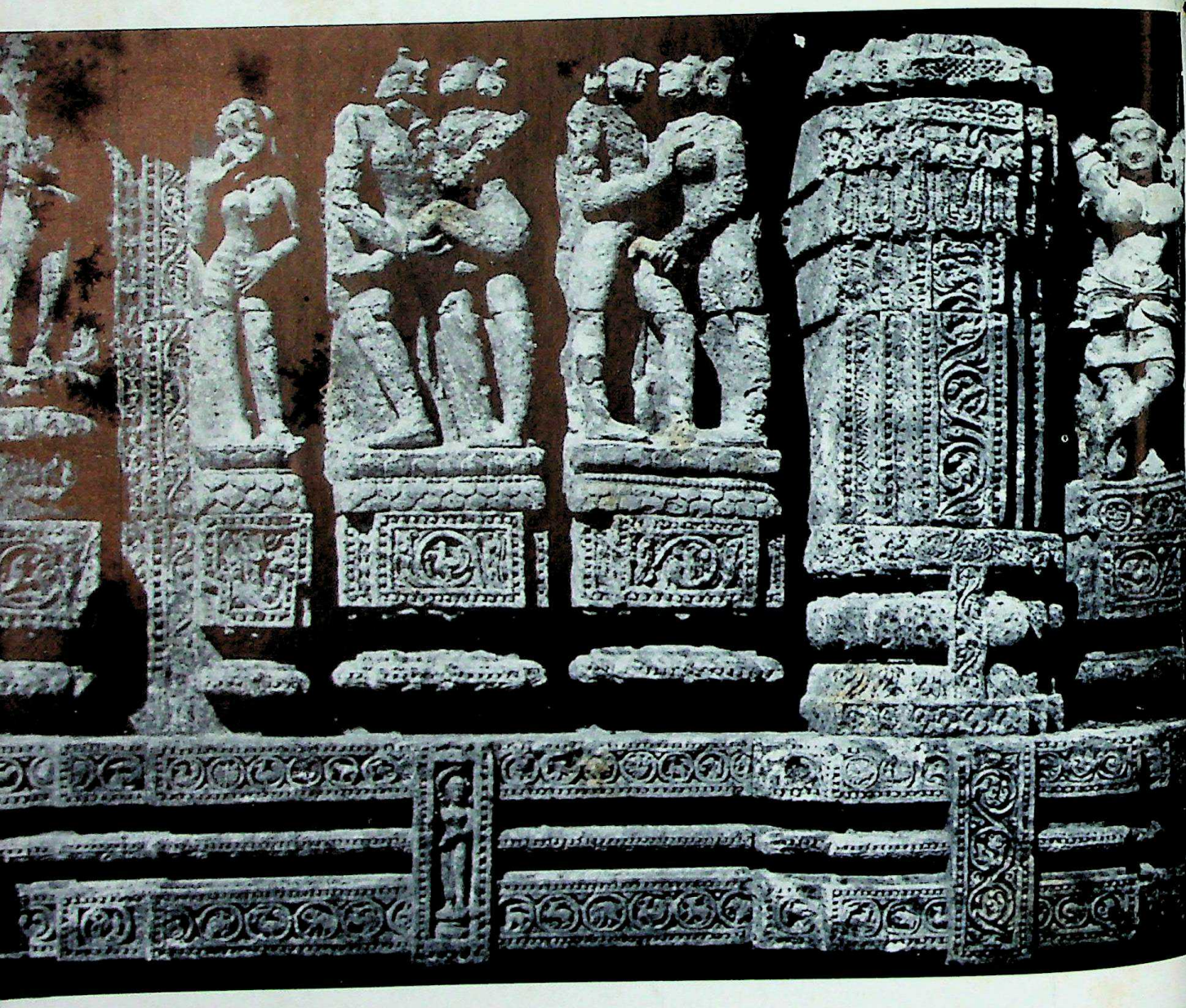

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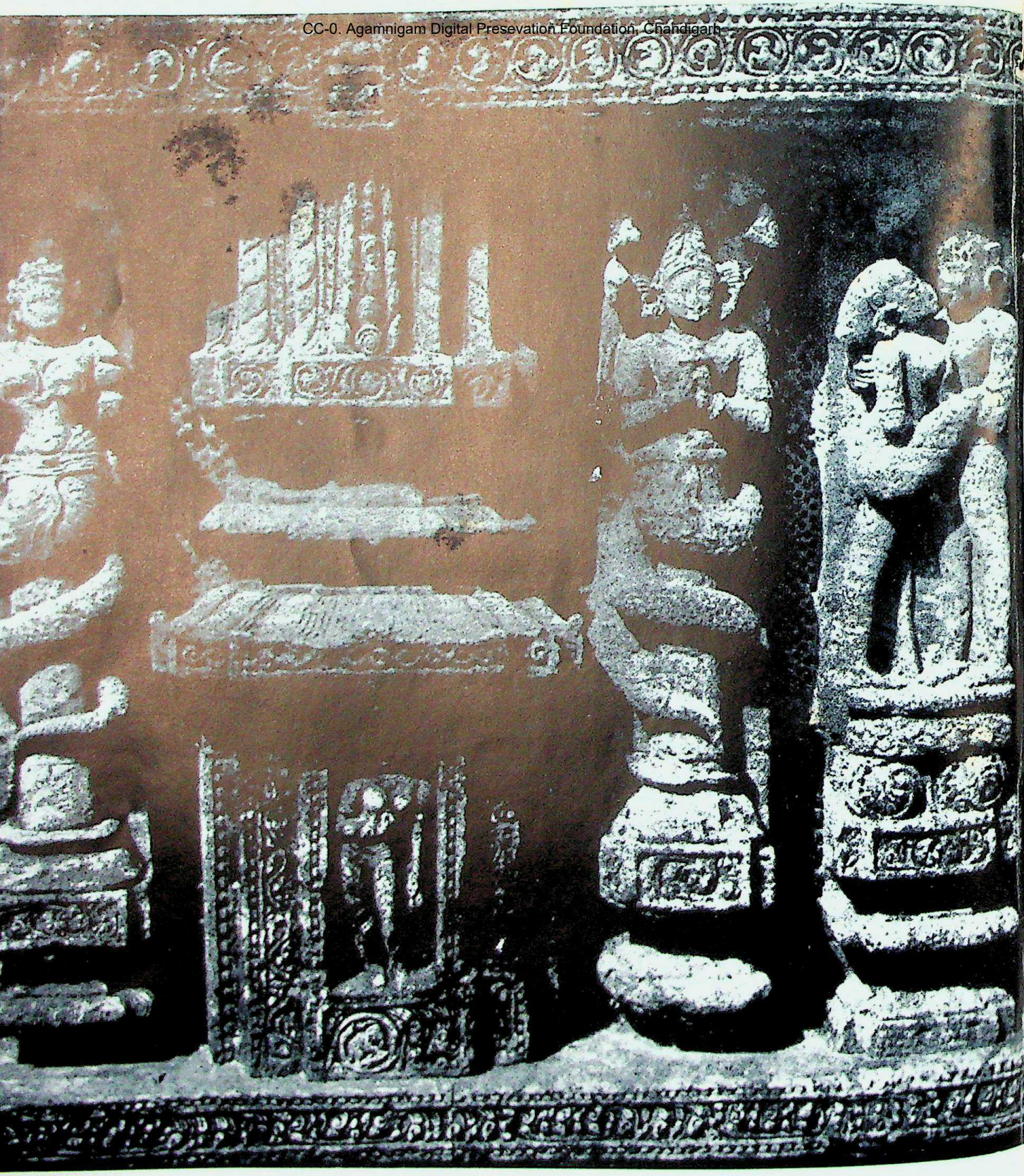

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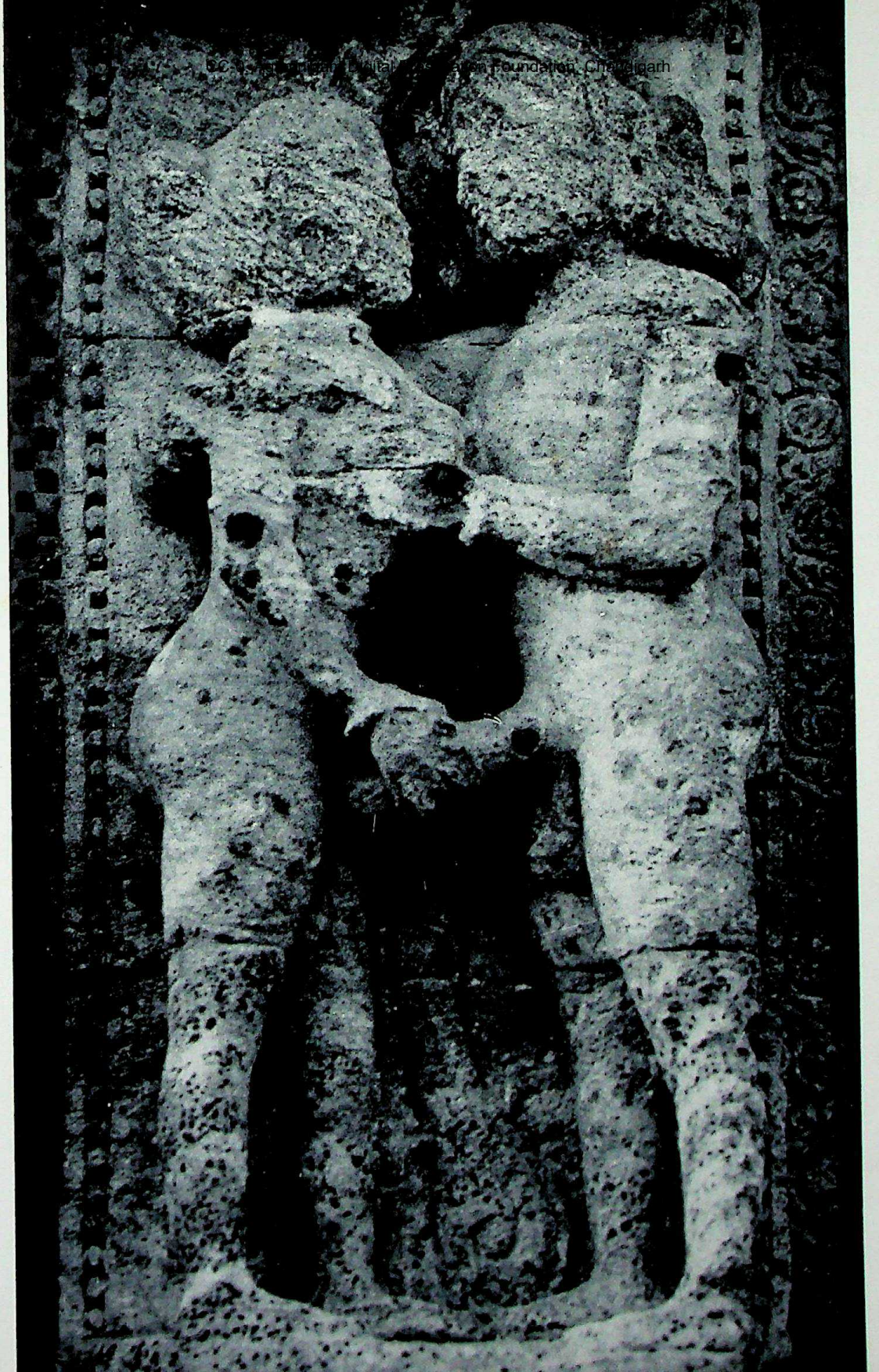

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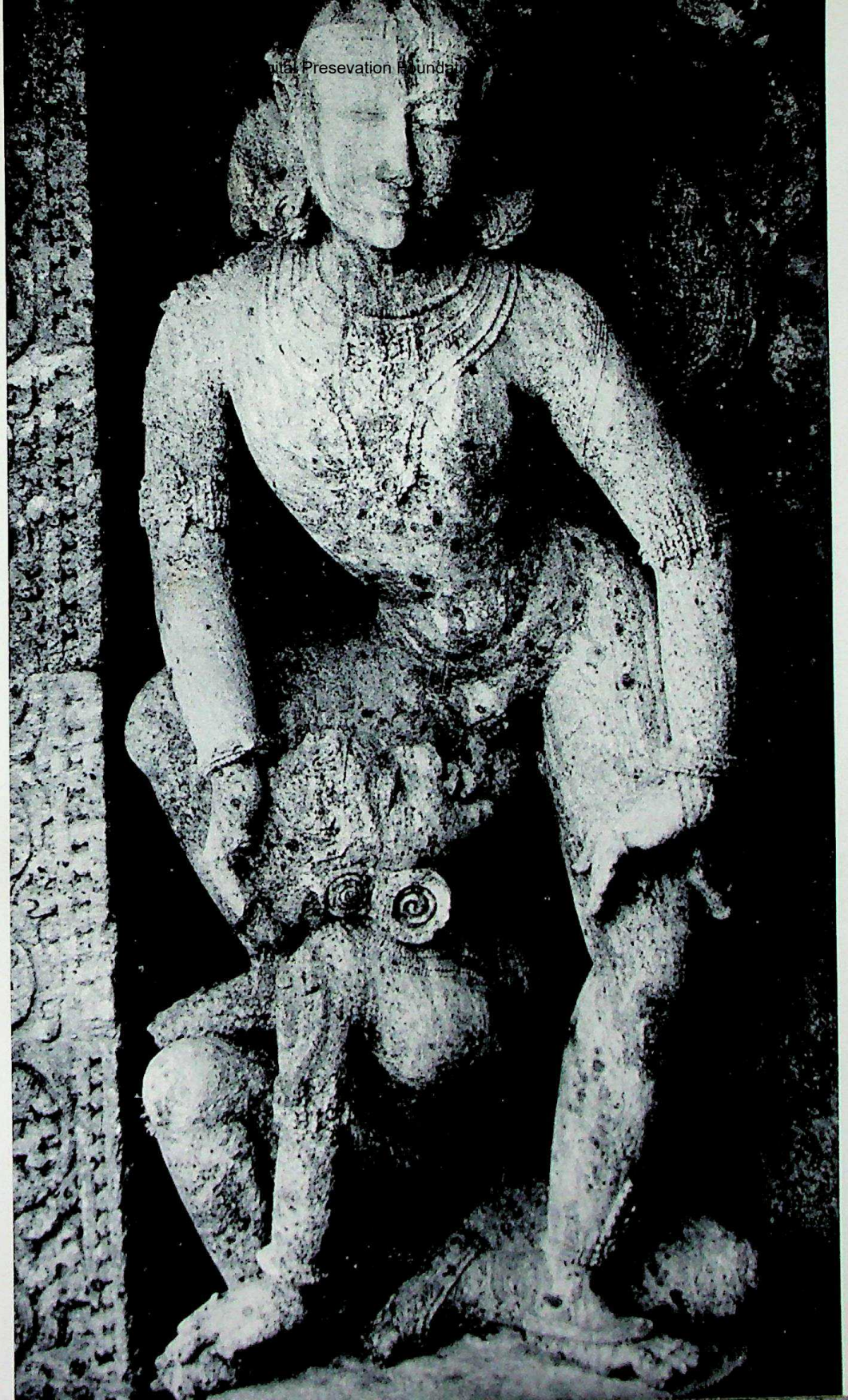

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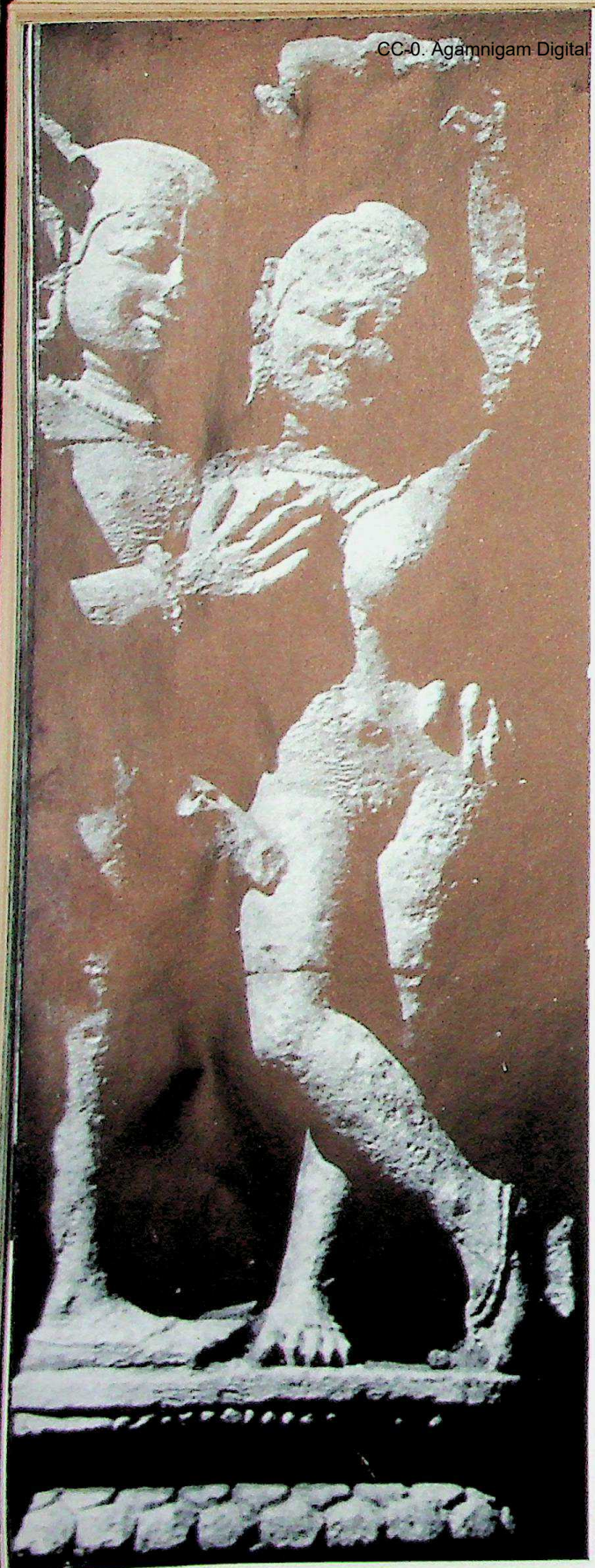

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